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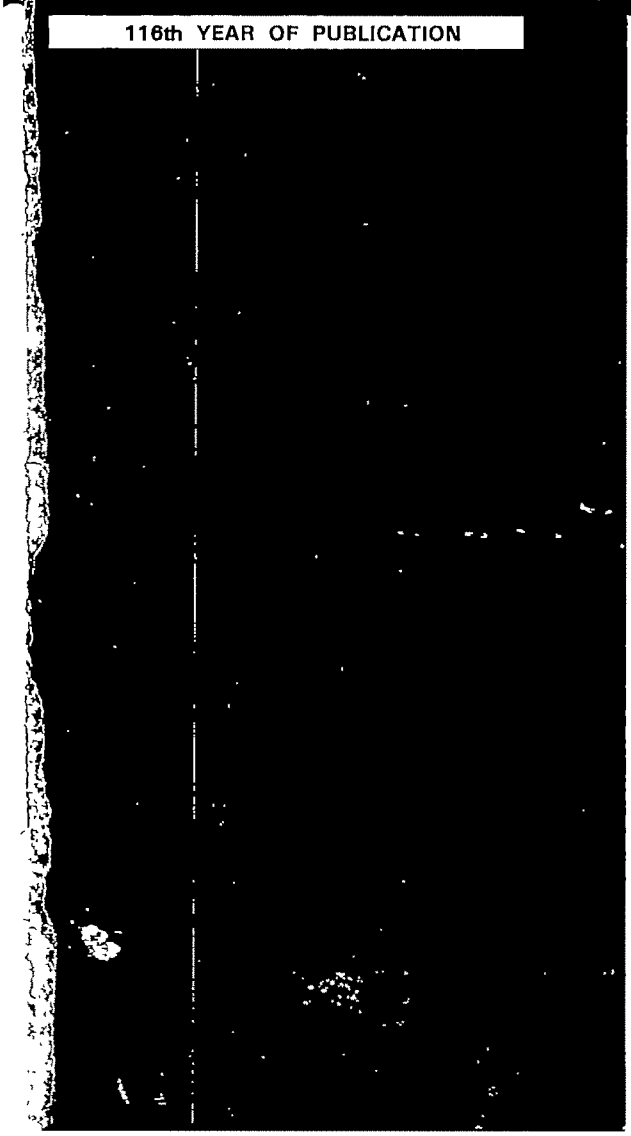

JANUARY 1981

THE REMODELLED SELECT COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS
R. S. Lankester

CHADIAN CRISIS—THE SEARCH FOR SOLUTION
S. E. Orobator

ARABIA: THE BRITISH CONNECTION
W. Norman MacDonald

GAINSBOROUGH
Cyril Fradan

and other articles together with a twelve-page Literary Supplement

207

90p

# Contemporary Review

incorporating The Fortnightly

January 1981 Vol. 238 No. 1380 Founded 1866

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*Editor*:
ROSALIND WADE

*Associate Editor*:
BETTY ABEL

*Editorial Advisers*:
PROFESSOR ESMOND WRIGHT
PROFESSOR PAUL WILKINSON

*Fine Arts Correspondent*.
ERNLE MONEY

*Music Correspondent*.
DAVID FINGLETON

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## CHADIAN CRISIS—THE SEARCH FOR SOLUTION

### by S. E. Orobator

FOR the last sixteen years, the Republic of Chad has been caught up in a complicated tangle of domestic problems which seem to be worsening from day to day. This apparently overwhelming series of crises is perhaps encouraged but certainly complemented by external forces, which go to make the solution to the country's problems more difficult to achieve. The Chadian crisis is the consequence of a long-term civil strife which has its origins in the political, socio-economic and perhaps cultural background of the country, all enhanced by the colonial legacy. The crisis in Chad therefore presents a rather rare but nonetheless an interesting problem for the historian, the politician and even the economist.

Perhaps the most glaring example of a raw and ruthless struggle for political power in Africa today is that represented by the domestic crisis in the Republic of Chad. Situated in sudanic Africa, Chad is bounded in the North by Libya, on the south by the Central African Republic, on the east by Sudan and on the West by the Cameroon, Nigeria and Niger. The total area is about 1,283,000 sq. km., and it was a French colony from 1898 to 1960.[1] The population of the country as at mid-1977, according to the United Nations estimate, was 4.2 million and is made up of nomadic Muslims in the North and the sedentary Christians or Animists in the South. The most important ethnic group in the North is the Toubou, numbering 85,000, and in the South the Sara, numbering one million. The greater percentage of the country's population is in the South and 45% of the entire population are Muslims, 5% Christians and 50% Animists.[2]

During the era of colonialism, the South was more easily agreeable to French influence than the North. Resistance to colonialism was pronounced especially in the Borkou, Ennedi and the Tibesti regions of the North, close to the Libyan border, and peopled largely by the Toubous, who remained resentful of foreign influence even well after Chad's independence. The different attitudes of the North and South to French imperialist infiltration were to have some consequences upon the political and cultural history of the country. Finding the Southerners more acceptable to work with, the French soon patronised them with government positions and scholarships, leading to an uneven development of manpower between the North and the South by the time of Chad's independence in August 1960.[3]

At independence, power was handed over to Francois Tombalbaye, a Southern Christian and a Sara whose party, the *Parti Progressive Tchadien* (PPT) had won the pre-independence general elections. The leadership of Tombalbaye was viciously challenged by the other political groups, notably the *Action Sociale Tchadienne* (AST). *The Union Démocratique et Indépendance du Chad* (UDIT); the *Groupement des Indépendants Ruraux du Chad* (GIRT); and the *Mouvement Socialiste African* (MSA) which had formed a grand alliance (known as the *Parti National Africain, PNA*) in opposition to Tombalbaye's PPT.

However, the apparently concerted opposition to Tombalbaye was rather short-lived for the President was soon able to devise methods ranging from lobbying and bribery to outright repression in order to disorganise the PNA. In January 1962, the PNA was formally dissolved and Chad became a one-party state. By a parliamentary resolution of June 1964, all members of the 75 man National Assembly had to be members of Tombalbaye's PPT.[4] Although the Assembly was to have equal representation from the North and South, it was fully under the control of President Tombalbaye, who had been re-elected for a seven-year term from April 1962.

The dissolution of the PNA, the establishment of a one-party state and the apparently forcible assimilation of every member of the National Assembly into Tombalbaye's Progressive party were generally accepted in the South, especially amongst the Sara; Tombalbaye's home support. But in the North, particularly in Borkou, Ennedi and Tibesti districts, resentment of the state of affairs quickly grew to disturbing proportions, culminating in 1963 in occasional violence and even a conspiracy against the Government. To the Northerners, Tombalbaye's dictatorial tendencies and his bias towards the Southerners in governmental appointments were a continuation of French colonialism, to which they had never been quite receptive. The President was, consequently, regarded as a reliable agent of French imperialism. Opposition to Tombalbaye, which arose initially from political considerations, eventually widened into ethnic and even religious quarels. From 1964 onwards, therefore, concerted efforts were made by Northerners to dislodge the Southerners from vital governmental positions, overthrow the government of Francois Tombalbaye and

possibly install in its place one dominated by the North. The rebellion and crisis had begun and the principal targets were Tombalbaye and his government. In fact, conflict was between the North and the South, and was for political and economic control of the country.

Following the Northern rebellion of 1964, the opposition to Tombalbaye and his government soon gathered considerable strength, culminating in the formation in 1966 of a formidable resistance movement known as the Front for the National Liberation of Chad (FROLINAT). Amongst the main aims of this organisation were the overthrow of the Tombalbaye administration and the take-over of the government. FROLINAT originated in the Republic of Sudan and was in opposition to Tombalbaye's crack-down on the only parliamentary Opposition party, the PNA, and the establishment of a one-party state in 1962, as well as an attempt by the North to correct the errors of the past, through which the government was dominated largely by the Southerners.

The Muslim rebellion of 1964 was followed in 1965 by another, led and organised by peasants who were protesting against the Government's taxation laws in respect of land. Tombalbaye, with the advice of some Southern elite had launched a 'national loan,' expected to speed up the economic and social development of the country. The loan was obligatory and its general conditions were such that it constituted an additional burden on the peasants who were already unhappy with their socio-economic position in the country. The 1965 peasant rebellion had broken out at Mangalme, in the mountain region of Guera, in October of that year, and in 1966 there was a second peasant uprising at Ouaddai, near the Chadian border with the Sudan. In 1967, there was yet another rebellion of peasants, supported by the majority of inhabitants in Salamat, in the Southern part of the country. And in August 1968, the Toubou Normad Guards revolted at Aozou in the Tibesti region of the North.

The Government's reaction to each and every one of these rebellions was stern. Tombalbaye's troops restored order with military precision leading to the death of a number of people and the arrest of many others. Nevertheless, the opposition to Tombalbaye's administration remained strong, and in fact it was in the midst of these official reactions that FROLINAT was established in 1966. The opposition had in their file an enormous list of grievances against the Government. In the main, they accused Tombalbaye of high-handedness, nepotism or ethnicism, undue harshness and dictatorial tendencies. They were unhappy with the state of the national economy, accusing the President of mismanagement and blaming him for the poor results in agriculture. The policy of indigenisation, 'Chaditude', launched in 1973 to enhance or probably create a spirit of 'Africanness' in Chad, was unsatisfactory to the opposition and in fact helped to broaden their support base. In carrying out this policy, Tombalbaye imitated the Mobutu style. He changed his first name, Francois, to Ngarta (true chief) and urged all Chadians to do the same. Public places of various types were re-named and there was large-scale

Government intervention in the churches and other public organisations. Yet the core of the matter was left untouched. The economy of Chad remained firmly in the hands and under the control of foreigners, particularly the French. The generality of the people of Chad did not find much difference from the past. Indeed, there was none. The opposition capitalised on this half-hearted policy of indigenisation by accusing Tombalbaye of initiating it only as a cover-up for the weakness of the Chadian economy and the failure of his other policies.

Another point held against the Tombalbaye government by the opposition was the policy of compulsory initiation of Chadians into the Yondo rites of the President's 'tribe'. Civil servants and politicians alike were forcibly initiated and summary executions were meted out to those who refused to co-operate. Many Christians of the South, particularly the Protestants, lost their lives for resisting initiation. Muslims, however, were not initiated.[5] The entire exercise was designed to frighten and suppress political opponents and to guarantee a more reliable political power base, particularly amongst the privileged Sara ethnic group to which Tombalbaye belonged. Yet at the end he made as many enemies as he gained for he alienated a considerable number of Christians who had been his ardent supporters.

Moreover, Tombalbaye was accused of being indifferent to the reconciliation of the Northerners with their Southern brothers, and of seeking a military victory over the insurgents. In addition, Tombalbaye fell out of favour with the army, upon which he had been relying for the restoration of order. The growing strength of the opposition, complemented by the poor performances of the Chadian troops in some sectors of the battle fronts, led Tombalbaye to rely from time to time on French military and logistic support. Failure in battle resulted in increasing reprisal upon the army. In 1972, an army General, Negy Djogo, was placed under house arrest. In June 1973, General Felix Malloum, Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, was similarly treated and in April 1975 Colonel Namari Djimet was also detained.

The alienation of the armed forces provided the immediate major cause of the fall of the Tombalbaye government on April 13th, 1975. The army upon which he had relied for maintaining the territorial integrity of Chad and for keeping himself in power had overthrown him in self-defence. They were afraid of being caught up in the witch-hunting exercise launched by Tombalbaye, who was himself acting out of paranoid fear.

Also contributing to the fall of Tombalbaye was Libya. The Chadian leader had fallen out with President Gaddafi over the rebellions in Chad. He had accused Libya of aiding anti-Government groups in the country, especially in 1969 when his government would have been overthrown but for the timely intervention of the French. He severed diplomatic relations with Libya in that year and from then on Colonel Gaddafi offered more concrete support by way of arms supplies to the enemies of Tombalbaye. In 1971 he went further and occupied the Aozou strip in North Chad,

known to be rich in uranium, platinum, gold and some oil, claiming it as part of Libya by an agreement reached between France and Italy in 1935.[6] The Tombalbaye-Gaddafi rift, coupled with the pro-FROLINAT policy of both Libya and Sudan, constituted the main external causes which led to the fall of the Tombalbaye government in 1975.

The overthrow of Tombalbaye was carried out by the young officers of the Chadian army, joined at the last moment by the interim Chief-of-Staff, General Mbailau Odingar. The leaders of the coup released General Felix Malloum, their former Chief-of-Staff, who had been detained by Tombalbaye since 1973, and subsequently made him Head of State and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces.

With Felix Malloum as the leader of Chad, many observers had hoped for an early solution to the country's crisis. Firstly, Malloum appeared to be a compromise candidate in that his mother was a Northerner and his father a Sara from the South of the country. Secondly he, like a number of Chadians, had been subjected to the harsh rule of Tombalbaye and was equally happy at the President's downfall. Moreover, in assuming the Chairmanship of the new nine-man Supreme Military Council (CSM), he promised to seek a political solution to the North-South confrontation and to help revive the ailing economy of the country.

His strategy of reconciliation included offering Northerners government offices and mending bridges with the FROLINAT movement, which had been at war with the Central Government. Malloum dissolved the National Assembly and the *Mouvement national pour la révolution culturelle et Sociale* (MNRCS), set up in August 1973 by Tombalbaye in substitution for the Progressive Party (PPT). Political prisoners, most of them were Northerners, were set free and a Provisional Government with half of its members Northerners was established.

But Malloum's initial efforts at achieving national reconciliation proved unsatisfactory to the Muslim North and the FROLINAT, representing their interests, seemed keen on a complete take-over of power. The change of government at N'Djemena and the promises made by Malloum were simply not attractive enough. During 1977, the military pressure mounted by the FROLINAT against Malloum's forces became increasingly successful, until Malloum was forced to solicit the support of France and Libya to save N'Djemena from rebel hands. France came to the aid of Malloum but Libya remained apparently unreceptive to his call for help, since Colonel Gaddafi had not secured the necessary approval to back up his claim to the Aozou district, forcibly occupied by Libya since 1971. Like Tombalbaye, his predecessor in office, Malloum came to rely more and more on foreign support, particularly French, to prevent FROLINAT from achieving complete victory. But unlike Tombalbaye Malloum, although with little success, sought the co-operation and understanding of FROLINAT in the bid to secure peace and unity for Chad. But before considering the attempts he made in this direction, it is instructive to look at the FROLINAT movement in greater detail and to examine its problems in the attempt to take over power in Chad.

FROLINAT, as has been already mentioned, was established by a Muslim resistance group of Northern Chad in 1966 and was formally inaugurated in the Republic of Sudan. The initial objective of FROLINAT was to overthrow Tombalbaye and to claim political and some other privileges which were being denied the North by the Tombalbaye government. It was also possible that FROLINAT contemplated secession of the North from Chad, especially at the initial stages when the conflict was specifically between the North and South.

With the fall of Tombalbaye in 1975, the FROLINAT organisation had achieved one of its principal aims, although it was actually the army that finally severed Ngarta from power. But FROLINAT remained in strong opposition to the Government at N'Djemena, despite the change of leadership. Yet FROLINAT had its own problems. There was much in-fighting within the movement and leadership changed hands frequently. Several factions soon grew out of the original organisation as efforts to patch over the cracks within it failed.[7] Nevertheless, FROLINAT remained a formidable military and political force in Chad. Their armies were armed with sophisticated military hardware, including Soviet-made SAM 7 missiles probably supplied by Libya, since the USSR was known to be in favour of the Malloum government. In terms of fire-power, they were stronger than the Chadian army and by the beginning of 1978 FROLINAT claimed to be holding a total of 2,000 prisoners out of Chad's 5,000 soldiers.[8] Many defections from the Government to the rebels' side were also reported.

It was in recognition of the rebels' strength that President Malloum initiated a dialogue with some of the FROLINAT leaders, amongst whom were Hissen Habre, Goukouni Oueddei and Abubakar Abdelraman, who headed some of the various factions of the same organisation. Malloum knew that the strongest factions of the FROLINAT movement were those led by Goukouni Oueddei, the son of a Northern spiritual leader, and Hissen Habre, another Northerner of considerable influence. Oueddei and Habre belonged formerly to the same wing of FROLINAT—the Second Army. But in October 1976 a disagreement broke out between the two leaders over the military performance of troops under their control, Hissen Habre relinquished leadership of the Second Army and established his own movement—the Armed Forces of the North Command Council (CCFAN). Command of the FROLINAT Second Army passed to Goukouni Oueddei and, while the quarrel between the two FROLINAT leaders lasted, President Malloum made peace proposals to Hissen Habre, offering him the post of Prime Minister in August 1978.[9] Malloum had calculated on reducing the strength of the opposition, possibly by playing off one against the other. Another movement won over by Malloum was the Chad Liberation Front (FLT), led by Hassan Ahmed Moussa who had his military base in the Southern part of the country.

The agreement—*Charte Fondamentale*—reached between Malloum and Habre gave powers to Habre to form a transitional government. Under its terms, the Supreme Military Council established by Malloum was abolished and replaced by a Council of Defence and Security (CDS). The

new Council was of 16 members, half of whom were nominated by Habre and half by Malloum, but the legislative powers were vested in a National Council of Unity. Habre's armed force, the CCFAN, was to be abolished and absorbed into the Chadian National Army.

Habre's appointment was well taken by those who regarded him as a great nationalist because of his consistent opposition to the Libyan claim to the rich Aozou district of Northern Chad. His Premiership was also popular amongst some Northerners, particularly his own Garone/Toubou ethnic population who had hopes for political appointments. And, indeed, the Northerners were in a slight majority in the Habre government, for the first time in Chad's political history.

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1. *Worldmark Encyclopaedia of the Nations*—AFRICA—Vol. 2, New York 1971, p. 41.
2. *Africa South of the Sahara* 1979-1980. Europa Publications Limited, London 1979, p. 275.
3. *Africa*, No. 97, September 1979, p. 26.
4. *Africa South of the Sahara, Ibid* p. 276.
5. *Africa South of the Sahara*, Op. cit. p. 277.
6. *West Africa*, No. 3173, May 8, 1978, pp. 882-883.
7. Breakaway groups from the movement continued to use the name FROLINAT, since each claimed to be liberating Chad.
8. *Africa Confidential* Vol. 19, No. 6, March 17, 1978, p. 6.
9. *Africa No.* 97 September 1976, p. 27; *Africa South of the Sahara*, Op. Cit. p. 278.

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[Dr. S. E. Orobator is lecturer in History at The University of Benin. A second article *Chad after the Débacle: is there a Solution?* will be published in the February issue.]

# THE BRITISH LABOUR PARTY: NATIONALISM AND THE EEC

## by Kevin Featherstone

THE decision at the 1980 Labour Party Conference to support a policy of withdrawal from the European Community shows once again how troublesome the issue has been to the party. The Labour Party has developed a notorious record on questions of European policy: throughout the post-war era, if not before, it has approached questions of European co-operation with equivocation and ambiguity, much to the disappointment of its continental allies. An examination of its history indicates that Labour's antagonism towards Europe is based on a deep-rooted national orientation within the party—(a belief in the British nation-state)—which, whilst it provokes hostility towards the EEC, is unlikely to offer an alternative to membership that the party in government will be prepared or able to pursue within the foreseeable future. It is for such reasons that I believe the current fears of pro-marketeers are a little excessive.

In intra-party terms, the issue has certainly been of major importance: for a whole period of its history, party personnel were identified as 'pro-' or 'anti-market'; party careers have been shaped in no small way by an individual's stance on the issue, not least that of Roy Jenkins; and now the issue has taken on an additional importance for the future—it is one more issue on which the Conference and the Parliamentary Party are divided. Whilst Conference voted by 5.04 million votes to 2.09 million in favour of a clear-cut commitment to withdrawal, the PLP have a majority of members in favour of staying in.

The Conference made withdrawal official party policy and, according to party rules, it should now go forward for inclusion in the next manifesto. Whether it does so will clearly depend, in great part, on the outcome of the party's current constitutional struggles and who finally becomes party leader. Whilst anti-marketeers at Blackpool were rejoicing over their success, pro-Europeans like Mrs. Shirley Williams seem set on threatening to leave the party if the policy of withdrawal is adhered to. And at least some of her anti-market parliamentary colleagues are concerned over that prospect: Peter Shore emphasised in Blackpool that 'we want them to remain with us in all that we do in the future'.

But how have Labour reached their present position and, given the varying opinions within the party, what can we expect their foreign policy to be in the future? On the first question we cannot but be brief here, but fortunately a reply to one helps us to understand the implications of the other.

Ever since the initiative on European unity made by Aristide Briand in 1929, the Labour Party has been hesitant to subordinate the presumed prerogatives of the nation-state to those of a wider international alliance. The British Foreign Office effectively squashed the Briand proposals, and the later Attlee government was too concerned with its domestic socialist

venture to be prepared to entertain wider notions. Later, whilst the party was prepared to enter defence alliances like NATO, in the political and economic field it was more hesitant and jealously guarded national sovereignty, seeking to avoid any long-term moves towards federation. Throughout this period, party rhetoric rarely matched party practice. Though the party declared in 1948 that, 'The ideal of European unity can only be saved from corruption by reactionary politicians if the Socialists place themselves at the head of the movement for its realisation', the party were not prepared to give the lead.

With the Macmillan application to enter the EEC in 1962, Hugh Gaitskell sought to avoid another party row for himself and saw electoral advantage in opposing the Tory moves. Though on the Right of the party, and though colleagues like George Brown were pressing him to be more responsive, Gaitskell feared that the EEC meant premature commitment and one that undermined Britain's world role and Commonwealth links. Consequently, he spoke at the 1962 Labour Conference of the prospect of sacrificing a thousand years of British history, and presented himself as a national statesman of stature. He was well received —a copy of the speech was distributed throughout the party—and his position as Party leader was safeguarded.

By 1966, the Wilson government had found itself in serious economic difficulties and saw the EEC issue as a way of reviving flagging fortunes. Both the Liberals and the Conservatives (headed by Edward Heath) were giving the issue an enthusiastic emphasis, and Harold Wilson seems to have envisaged some political capital in pre-empting their propaganda. The Wilson justification was related to the need for international co-operation in matters of modern technology, an idea he had used to great effect in previous years and a notion that could cross-over traditional divides between Left and Right within the party. However, for a second time, De Gaulle vetoed the British application.

With EEC entry achieved under Heath, Wilson sought to unite the party around a rejection of the terms of accession, but not necessarily the principle. He echoed earlier party concerns for essential national interests being safeguarded and reference was made to the five conditions of entry laid down by Gaitskell. The Labour government then renegotiated the terms of entry and put the results to a referendum in June 1975. Whilst the Labour government advised the electorate to vote 'yes', the Labour Party Conference advised them to vote 'no' to EEC membership. Afterwards, an increasingly left-wing Labour NEC headed moves to commit the party to seeking fundamental changes in Britain's relations with the EEC. The concern was largely with national sovereignty and the prerogatives of the House of Commons—if Britain was to be a member, membership ought to involve a looser connection.

The Labour Party then—despite the aberration of the 1967 application —has always sought to identify itself with the national interest and the protection of British sovereignty. As Socialists they have developed a close understanding with the Third World and have maintained wider international links than those of Europe, but the party's instincts have

typically been antagonistic towards any organic link with the continent. Rather, the party tradition has been to see the British nation-state as the natural unit of socialist planning. Whatever the party's socialist projections for the future, they are at root based on the belief that a British government can achieve its objectives independent of outside help. So long as the international environment is, in general, one of peace and detente and as long as world trade is not in a catastrophic depression, a Labour government in Britain has the potential to experiment according to the party's desires. Ideas of planning agreements and public ownership are indeed means by which the national sphere can maintain itself as the controlling unit in the economic field.

The party conflicts between Left and Right clearly indicate varied beliefs on a range of policy issues. The parliamentary Right in the Labour Party is typically pro-EEC, the parliamentary Left is typically anti-EEC. The Right detects the possibility of building a social democratic Europe, the Left sees the prospects for Socialism as being higher within a British context. Most of the comments made above are clearly more applicable to the latter rather than the former position, but they do reflect the majoritarian view within the Labour Party as a whole and they are conclusions drawn from the broad sweep of party history. It is for these reasons that we must give them importance in our analysis.

So what, then, of Labour's foreign policy in the future? The 1980 Conference resolution committed the party to 'disengage Britain from the EEC institutions and in place of our EEC membership work *for peaceful and equitable relations between Britain and all the nations in Europe and the rest of the world*'. Whilst the pro-marketeers have always equated internationalism with the EEC, the rest of the party have always sought to maintain British links with the wider world. But to seek 'peaceful and equitable relations' with all other nations is to see the independent nation-state as the prime political agent in world diplomacy and economics. In that sense, an *inter*nationalist policy means a nationalist policy—Labour are nationalising themselves in identifying with the British nation-state and in seeing it as the agent for control.

Two qualifications need to be mentioned to the adoption of such a policy: first, there will be the pressure from the Right to settle for a more acceptable compromise; second, if withdrawal is implemented it cannot be a return to the world of pre-1973. On the prospects for a compromise on EEC policy, the most likely outcome would be for the party to commit itself to holding another referendum before pulling Britain out. Pro-marketeers like former Foreign Secretary Dr. David Owen would be prepared to accept this formula—indeed he told delegates at Blackpool that, 'It is a constitutional outrage first to let the British people decide in 1975 and now not even to give them the chance to determine their own destiny.' If the party in 1981 is seeking to re-establish party unity, then such a formula may eventually be adopted. But many party activists see a clear-cut policy of withdrawal, laid down in the next general election manifesto, as a tremendous vote-catcher and it could be an important part of the Left's alternative economic strategy. Though, given that the

next election may not be until 1984, the party has a long time to paper over this divide and a referendum commitment is the most likely compromise.

But, if Labour did pull Britain out of the EEC, what is the likely state of the world they would find? Having entered the EEC, Britain cannot realistically expect to re-establish Commonwealth ties to such an extent that they would act as an economic substitute. And though some on the Left would urge a policy of independence and non-alignment, the party is very unlikely to consider pulling out of NATO—at Blackpool NATO membership was decisively endorsed. So, continued membership of the Western Alliance, greater emphasis on Commonwealth links, and the renewed assertion of an independent British foreign policy would seem to be the likely outcome of EEC withdrawal.

Yet, economically, British exports would be put at a serious disadvantage—43% of UK exports currently go to other Community members and, faced with an external trade tariff, these would inevitably suffer. Unlike earlier notions of an alternative free trade areas,—the E.F.T.A. experience led Britain into the Community—something similar is unlikely to be seen as an adequate replacement when leaving. So, if a British Labour government is embarking on a new socialist direction, external economic relations may pose a major problem to it. There is little reason to expect that it could negotiate preferential treatment with the Community having just left it, and previous experience with the 1967 devaluation of the Pound and negotiations with the IMF in 1976 indicate the dependence of a British government on the stability of international exchange markets. As a socialist government in a capitalist world, currency stability is not something Labour could rely on.

All the above suggests the difficulties for Britain in leaving the European Community. Given the more moderate composition of the Parliamentary Labour Party and its dominant influence on policy, this is likely to produce a compromise on a referendum being held first and the probability of withdrawal afterwards is so much decreased.

The suggestions made above should not be interpreted as claiming that there is no alternative to EEC membership—an alternative socialist supra-national grouping is indeed conceivable—but given the labourist ideology of the party, the alternatives do not seem likely. Even if a Labour government is elected, the chances for EEC withdrawal are not as great as they currently sound. Observers may be forgiven for feeling that '*plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*'.

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[Kevin Featherstone is Lecturer in Political Studies at the University of Stirling.]

# ARABIA: THE BRITISH CONNECTION

## Part 3: The Last Enigma

by W. Norman MacDonald

IN 1932 Ibn Saud became King of Saudi Arabia, one of the few countries in the world whose name incorporates that of its ruling family. Six years later, oil was discovered in Bahrain Island in the Persian Gulf, and modernity had established a beach-head—albeit a small one—close to the new kingdom. In time, the new invaders would establish a land-fall on the Saudi shore too; an event that would have far-reaching implications for the west, and give new power and impetus to the Islamic heartland.

Despite this harbinger of motor vehicles, radios, and aerial survey, there still remained a vast area yet unexplored. Known in the north as Al Rhub Al Khali, and to the Bedu who have long crossed it as Al Rimal—the sands—it is one of the most frightening geographical features on earth.

It is also the planet's largest continuous body of sand, covering four hundred and fifty thousand square miles. In its extreme western reaches it is a sand sea, but as it progresses it changes, first into enormous, sweeping sand dunes some five hundred feet and more in height and ultimately, as it nears journey's end on the Gulf coast wide, near-circular salt basins or *sabkhah.*

Linked to the Nafud by an umbilical cord of sand—in reality a sand river—thirty miles wide called Al Dahana, this immense area is the ultimate challenge; the Nobel Laureate of exploration.

By 1919 the northern peninsula had been extensively explored and mapped, the war adding momentum, men, and *raison d'être.* As this knowledge was sifted, the last enigma came increasingly to exercise the minds of the experienced, the chairborne, and the hopeful alike.

In 1929 T. E. Lawrence wrote to Lord Trenchard, suggesting that either of the airships R100 or R101 be diverted on their trial flights to India, so as to pass over the southern desert. 'To go over the empty quarter will be an enormous advertisement for them,' he wrote. But it was not to be; the great waste would, in the end, surrender its stark soul to the oldest combination in exploration: men and animals.

The groundwork for this daunting feat was carried out in 1924 when Colonel Cheeseman, a Royal Engineers officer, discovered the oasis of Jabrin. Journeying for almost a week without water, he became the first European to traverse the territory of the Murra tribe, on the northern boundary of the empty quarter. Like all other graduates of Woolwich with a travelling bent, the Colonel was—by training and temperament—an accurate and methodical man, and had a number of enterprising treks behind him, principally in Ethiopia and the southern Sahara.

In the same year, Bertram Thomas was appointed a Minister in the Omani State Council, having previously served as a political officer in Iraq. He quickly gained the friendship of the Sheikh, which opened the interior

of the country to him. Consequently he made a number of investigative journeys one of which—from the coastal town of Suwaih, along the edge of the sands and south-west to Salala—lasted over six hundred miles. In 1929 he explored the Qarra mountains, studying the dialects of the people, establishing that their speech was akin to the ancient semitic tongues of the Minaeans, Sabaeans, and Himyarites.

These journeys were but a training for his main aim; to cross the great waste. Having adapted to Bedu ways, he left Dhufar—reputedly the biblical Ophir—on the 16th of December 1929, with a team of fifteen camels and Rashid guides.

He had chosen well, for the Rashid are the great wanderers of Arabia, covering vast distances from the Yemen in the west to the Gulf States in the east; from Dhufar in the south to Riyadh and the edge of the Hasa in the north.

As they crossed the northern slopes of the Qarra range, he was distracted by the calls of his guides 'ar Rimal, ar Rimal'. The first crossing of the empty quarter by a European, the dream of Doughty and others, had begun.

On December 22nd, whilst making navigational and cartographical sitings in secret—lest he be suspected of magic or worse—Thomas heard what few Europeans before him had heard; the 'singing' of the sands. It came from a one hundred foot hight sand dune, the noise of which he likened to a ship's siren. After spending Christmas at the well of Khor Dhahiya, he pressed on through days hot enough to blister the skin, and nights when the temperature dropped below fifty degrees fahrenheit.

At the well he had acquired a fresh supply of camels and new guides, one of whom was a Murri Hamad bin Hadi, who would guide and protect the party through his tribal lands. Four days later they reached the water hole at Shauuna, where they killed an ailing camel and feasted off its carcass.

Reducing his party to twelve men, thereby extending his ration supply to thirty days and taking on another Murri guide, Talib—who had already crossed the sands earlier in the year—Thomas set out on the final four hundred miles, a northward drive through Dakaka and Suwahib to Doha. Throughout the journey Hamad proved an excellent guide, as Thomas discovered, by checking their track every two or three hours with his compass. The Murri rarely deviated more than five degrees from true course.

On February 2nd, 1930, Thomas, in company with Hamad and Talib, climbed the steep slopes of a hill called Makhala.

Below him to the west, he could see Jafura; to the east the distant, leaden flatness of the Persian Gulf. Moving on before dawn, they arrived at Ma'aya and—watering for the last time—saw, beyond the well, the tower of Doha. Half an hour later, they entered the fort, their pioneering journey over.

Despite the relative easiness of the route—whose vagaries were intimately known to his guides—Thomas's feat was heroic indeed, for he was

the first westerner to come among the southern tribes and to live and travel as they did, thus earning their respect. True, he had—to them—his eccentricities, like enjoying his own company from time to time, but this they accepted if they did not understand it. Years later, one of them would relate to another Briton that Thomas had been a 'good travelling companion'; the greatest compliment within their compass.

During this period, relations between Ibn Saud and his shock troops, the Ikhwan, steadily deteriorated. The brethren, their active role waning, had taken to brigandage and in 1929 slaughtered a party of Nejdi merchants. This wanton act caused deep revulsion as much among the nomadic tribes as the settled Nejdis.

The King now had the public support he needed to crush Ikhwan power, and at the battle of Sabalah he did just that. The following year, a small clutch of the Ikhwan leadership surrendered to the British authorities in Kuwait, whence they were extradited by the King. Whilst sparing their lives, he nevertheless ensured that they would give no further trouble by bringing them to Riyadh and imprisonment. The government also kept a careful eye on their remaining hijrahs, eventually incorporating them into the Saudi National Guard.

The battle of Sabalah was—in some respects—akin to Bosworth field. It made plain to all that the medieval Arabia was—if not totally destroyed—certainly on the way out. No longer would chieftains like Auda be able to defy central authority with impunity. True, the old ways would linger defiantly, bowing reluctantly to change, yet no longer willing to take up the scimitar in defence of the past.

In the far south however, the tribes maintained their wandering, brawling, existence. For them it was a necessity, and for the remaining Europeans who would travel among them it was equally so, for their respective societies had long eradicated the kind of challenge they sought. Industrialisation, organised transport, and an all-pervading bureaucracy had little time for the determinedly cussed loner. The supreme example of this kind of rejection was Harry Philby.

By 1924, he and his employers, the British government, had finally reached a rare moment of mutual agreement.

They decided that he should go. He returned to Jeddah, and resumed his association with the peninsula, and his friendship with the King. This friendship was strengthened even further in the late twenties, when Philby embraced the Islamic faith. Although deeply disappointed at having failed in his major ambition, he nevertheless sent Thomas a congratulatory telegram on his magnificent journey. In fact, the reason Philby had been thwarted in his ambition was the King's reluctance to grant him permission for such a hazardous undertaking.

In November 1930, however, the King relented and Philby began his preparations. On Christmas day he arrived in Hofuf and while Ibn Jawali —the ruthless and deeply feared Governor of the Hasa—arranged supplies, he explored Hofuf from end to end, rounding this off by motoring across the coastal dunes to the sea.

On his return, he found that the Governor had not been idle. Awaiting him were thirteen guides, thirty months' supplies, and a small herd of thirty-one camels. To the guides, the terrifying Ibn Jawali's instructions were simple; 'take him whither he would go, for his life, you answer with yours.'

The party set off early in January, Philby carrying letters of introduction from the Governor which—given his far-flung reputation—would more than ensure safety and—coupled with the King's considerable prestige—the freedom of the desert also.

Believing that an exhaustive, unmapped crossing would be the only compensation for Thomas's triumph, Philby struck southwest across the sands of Jafura to the oasis of Jabrin. The inhabitants of this palm-shaded island would be the last human beings they would encounter for two months. Whilst traversing the steppeland abutting the desert proper, they found the fossilised remains of an ostrich egg several thousand years old.

Another of the party's finds was a bronze arrowhead of great antiquity lying by the side of the Magainawa well. Trekking eastwards to Bir Fadhil, intent on discovering the fabled city of Wabar, Philby met his first disappointment. At the supposed location he discovered the mouth of a volcano whose twin-peaked craters—now sand filled and strewn with volcanic debris—had been the inspiration for 'a story of a city destroyed by fire from heaven for the sins of its King'. Doubt however remains, for his guides may have mis-directed him, fearing his legendary temper had they admitted they did not know the location of the place he sought.

Having found the well at Faraya to be sand-clogged, they rode on to Ibrahim, then cut south through the dunes for five days until they came upon another well. It too was unusable, and a small party was dispatched to nearby Naifa to replenish the water skins.

After five days at Ain Sela, they set out for Shanna where Philby—like Thomas before him—heard the 'roaring' of the sands. This was the furthermost southern point in his journey, for the guides were most reluctant to continue on his proposed route, which would have taken them over the Qarra range to Dhufar. Instead they headed westward, their new destination being Mecca. After five days of tough travel across the high dunes, ill-humour—recently never very far from the surface—broke out again. As a result, the party returned to Naifa where they divided, Philby choosing the fittest camels and the keenest men to accompany him across the western sands. The remainder he sent back to Hofuf with his geological and anthropological finds, and some of his notebooks.

With sixteen Bedu, fifteen camels, plentiful dried meat and dates and twenty-four full water skins, he set off westwards.

Ahead lay a frightening twelve to fifteen days of utter emptiness, devoid of any known source of water. Throughout the entire journey, only a rare scrawny bird hinted that anything could survive in this dead world.

After covering one hundred and twenty miles in five days, another quarrel broken out, this time over camel milk. Ibn Jawali had made it clear from the beginning that the milk was for Philby alone, but he had

shared it with the others. Now he caught them helping themselves without his permission, and immediately swore he would take no more of it until journey's end. With his iron determination, he kept his word and indeed two or three of his companions joined him in abstinence.

Continuing across Abu Bahr—the father of the sea—a massive gravel plain totally empty of anything—living or dead—they covered two hundred and fifty miles before Philby took his first drink.

With the Abu Bahr behind them, they had covered two hundred and seventy miles in six days, and Philby refused to go further without sleep. Despite protests as to the unsuitability of the location, his companions joined him.

Fed and rested, they pressed on across the Rumailia ridges and the Downs of Quannis—yet another bleak, burning, emptiness—before they saw ahead of them a flat plain with what appeared to be green stripes. As they drew nearer, the stripes gradually assumed the familiar outline of bushes.

Of all the desert explorers, Philby travelled farthest, probed more thoroughly, and mapped more extensively than any other, while his investigations into the peninsula's remote past were exhaustive, whether by camel, car or aircraft. Moreover, his written output was very much like the man himself; voluminous, thorough and accurate.

By the early thirties the boundaries of the Kingdom—mostly mapped by Philby with the King's permission or, sometimes, entirely without it—expanded with the absorption of the Asir province and—after a classic border war with the Yemen—the annexation of Najran.

With the discovery of oil in the eastern province prior to World War II, the old methods of travel gave ground to the ubiquitous motor car and the rapidly developing aircraft. Nevertheless, the eastern depth of the great waste remained unknown to Europeans, and after the war another Briton would explore them thoroughly, adding considerably to the totality of knowledge on Arabia.

Wilfred Thesiger is, perhaps, the greatest living explorer. Born in Addis Ababa in 1910 he too is a man of varied adventures and experiences. Oxford boxing blue, political agent, District Commissioner, wartime Special Air Service officer, and above all, relentless traveller.

Long fascinated by the remote and the almost inaccessible, it was, perhaps inevitable that Al Rimal would draw Thesiger to him like a prodigal son.

Offered a job by the Desert Locust Unit he accepted, for he saw in it the fulfilment of a long-standing desire; and so for five years from 1945 he travelled in the great waste and the interior of the Gulf States.

After his arrival in Salala he spent some months exploring the sands of Ghanin and Mughshin, adapting to Bedu ways and the timeless pattern of the desert. After secret preparations he set off, carrying an aneroid, a press for plants, and two books; *War and Peace* and a volume of Gibbon.

The chief guide, Al Auf, had crossed the sands two years before—alone. After watering at Khaur bin Atarit on the edge of the sands, they travelled

to Rambat al Ghafa, crossed the dreaded Uruq al Shaiba dunes in the east centre of the waste, finally arriving at Liwa oasis. The return journey took them through the Rabadh sands and across the flat expanse of the Jaddat al Harasis and the gravel plains of Oman, in all, a dauntingly hard three months on foot and camel-back.

Offered a new post by his employers, Thesiger refused as he wanted to complete his exploration of Al Rimal by crossing the western sands. Unsuccessful in soliciting King Ibn Saud's permission, he decided to go without it.

He set out from Saiwun—again with Rashid guides—crossing the frightening sands of Uruq al Zaza and the coarse face of the Jilda plain. On arrival at the Hassi well, the camels were exhausted, having eaten but one meal in eleven days.

The well's guardian—one of the Yam tribe—guided them to Sulaiyil virtually under arrest. Raiding had become commonplace in the area, and some of the tribes already knew that a Christian was travelling in the sands. Indeed—unknown to Thesiger—one party had already set out to track him down and kill him.

On arrival at Sulaiyil the Amir informed them that they must remain where they were until he heard from the King. After two days in detention, yet another day of waiting and the intercession of Abdullah Philby, the necessary permission was granted.

Leaving Sulaiyil on January 29th 1948, Thesiger arrivad at Laila eight days later. There he met his friend Philby, in transit on another of his journeys; this time to explore the ruins at Qariya, which no European had yet seen.

From Laila Thesiger pushed on to Jabrin, using the route pioneered by Cheeseman and Philby. He arrived at the oasis after a harrowing eight-day trek through al Dahana, made that much worse by fearful weather. On February 28th, they saw the sands of Liwa ahead of hem, where they had been the year before. After a period of rest, they persuaded a local man to guide them on the last one hundred and fifty miles to Abu Dhabi, and thus Thesiger arrived on the Gulf coast, having completed his second crossing of the sands.

Thesiger was the last of a distinguished breed who, in their insatiable desire for the remote and the inaccessible, opened up a desert kingdom and—paradoxically—in so doing changed the face of the land they had come to love.

Today, oil and mineral exploration teams—European and American—traverse the great waste in tracked vehicles, helicopters, and light aircraft, in the wake of the great pioneers. Their attitude to life is technological and impatient. Moreover, the pressures of an advanced economy under a raw-material siege tends to distort the priorities. True, the area has certain advantages from their point of view. It is less treacherous than the North Sea and less humid than the West African coast at some periods of the year. It is simply 'another tough one to crack', as the Libyan Desert had been in the early days, or as Alaska has been of late, although it is

'nothing to get excited about; simply a matter of organisation . . . logistics and technical support'.

The banalities drone on, reminding one of Kipling's lines:

> But I knew who'd get the credit;
> All those clever chaps who followed.

Yet the ironical thing about today's 'clever chaps' is that they seek neither credit nor indeed challenge and technical uniformity appears to be their only aim.

Today, Arabia is no more remote than London or Paris. The benefits of oil are creating vast opportunities for Nejdi, Hejazi and Bedu alike. The British too are still very much in evidence, trading, advising and training, although their days of political arbitration are over. Nevertheless, the possibility of partnership remains, should Britain, in the wake of her own oil boom, decided to join O.P.E.C. Within this forum, for the first time on genuinely equal terms, the two nations could conclude a satisfying finale to their spasmodic association over a hundred and fifty odd years.

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[W. Norman MacDonald, who has lived and worked for many years in Kuwait, contributed the first two articles in this series in Volume 235, No. 1359 and Volume 236, No. 1369.]

The February issue of *Contemporary Review* includes *Alcoholism: The New Pandemic* by J. A. Loraine, *The Good Life and the New Technology* by Viscount Thurso, *The Prospect for Nigeria* by Douglas Rimmer and *The Life of a Lord* by Paul Rose.

# THE REMODELLED SELECT COMMITTEE SYSTEM OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

**by R. S. Lankester**

THE House of Commons is chronically dissatisfied with its procedures and perennially seeks to adapt them to meet the changing demands made upon it. A Select Committee on Procedure was appointed in 1976 to make recommendations for the more effective performance of its functions. That Committee set themselves a more radical task than a mere up-dating and streamlining of procedures to enable the House to perform more comfortably its accustomed business. They diagnosed that 'the balance of advantage between Parliament and Government in the day to day working of the Constitution is now weighted in favour of the Government to a degree . . . which is inimical to the proper working of our parliamentary democracy'. After labouring for two years they produced seventy-six recommendations 'with the aim of enabling the House as a whole to exercise effective control and stewardship over ministers and the expanding bureacracy of the modern state for which they are answerable' Of these recommendations they gave priority to those designed to reorganise the structure of select committees. The incoming government in 1979 accepted both the select committee's order of priority and the essentials of their recommendations in this field, the core of which was the appointment of permanent select committees to monitor the activities of all the major departments of state. In June 1979 in moving for their appointment, Mr. St. John Stevas, the Leader of the House, saw them as the means of enabling the Commons:

> to subject the executive to limitations and control; to protect the liberties of the individual citizen; to defend him against the arbitrary use of power; to focus the mind of the nation on the great issues of the day by the maintenance of continuous dialogue and discussion; and by remaining at the centre of the stage to impose parliamentary conventions or manners on the whole political system.

Select Committees, which were thus the first chosen instrument to enable the House to redress the balance of power between Parliament and the Executive, are of considerable antiquity. They were perhaps at their most powerful in late Tudor and early Stuart times when the handling of the more important bills and matters was managed by select Committees to whom they were habitually referred. In Elizabeth's reign the committees were dominated by the most influential Members of whom a large number were courtiers. Thereafter the royal grip loosened; the Committees became larger and open to a wider membership, while at the same time the device of Committees of the whole House, which was to supersede select committees in importance, was developed. After the Restoration, select committees were of a secondary significance. The Commons progressively exerted their power in the House itself, where ministers were answerable for their conduct. This worked well enough when the scope of government was limited and its activities relatively simple; and even better when

governments lacked reliable majorities. With the ever increasing scope and complexity of Government activity over the past hundred years the ability of the House itself to monitor the activities of the Government has been progressively eroded. At the same time the select Committee system, while it continued to exist, was peripheral to the main activities of the Commons. Few bills were committed to select Committees, not least because this would be an addition to, rather than instead of, their other stages. The Public Accounts Committee was effective within the limits of its function, but many matters which might in earlier times have occupied Committees were now more commonly referred to Royal Commissions, departmentally appointed committees or other bodies.

Faced with the decline in Parliament's effectiveness in monitoring the actions of the executive and with the occasional glance at the Congress of the United States, the greater use of select committees has been advocated for many years to restore the pre-eminence of Parliament. Indeed the proper role of the Select Committee system has been a matter of contention since the beginning of this century between those who see in a powerful system of investigatory committees the only way in which Parliament can now fulfil its proper role of exacting accountability from the departments of state and those who do not wish either the supremacy of the House itself to be diminished by committees, or the proper functions of the executive to be usurped, and foresee this outcome.

Over more recent years there has been some strengthening of the Committee system in addition to the continued appointment from time to time of *ad hoc* committees. In 1948 the Estimates Committee was enlarged. In 1955 a Committee on Nationalised Industries was appointed. Richard Crossman experimented with 'Specialist Committees' in the later sixties and in 1970 the Estimates Committee was replaced by the Expenditure Committee. The latter had more members, a wider remit, and its inquiries were more systematically organised. It was a recognition of the value of the work done by that Committee and its six investigatory sub-committees in the seventies, coupled with a keen sense of what more could be achieved by more committees, concentrating on the work of particular ministries and with more resources at their disposal, which prompted the Procedure Committee to their recommendations touching select Committees, and the House substantially to implement them.

The Public Accounts Committee, the Committee on the Parliamentary Commissioners (the Ombudsmen) and the House's domestic committees were retained. The Expenditure Committee was abolished and the Committees on Nationalised Industries, Science and Technology, Race Relations, and Immigration, and Overseas Development, which had been in existence for varying numbers of years, were not reappointed. Their place was taken by Committees to examine the expenditure, administration and policy of twelve departments of state and their associated public bodies. The departments are:— Agriculture; Defence; Education, Science and Arts; Employment; Energy; Environment; Foreign Affairs; Home Affairs; Industry and Trade; Social Services; Transport; and Treasury and Civil

Service. In addition Committees on Scottish Affairs and Welsh Affairs were appointed with the same remit. The committees have between nine and thirteen members. The Committees on Foreign Affairs, Home Affairs and Treasury and Civil Service have the power to appoint a sub-committee, which they have exercised. The sub-committees of the Foreign Affairs and Home Affairs Committees have concentrated so far on Overseas Development, and Race Relations and Immigration respectively. In addition a Nationalised Industries sub-committee with members drawn from interested Committees could be set up in certain circumstances, but none has yet been constituted.

The Procedure Committee recommended a basic permanent staff for each departmental committee of a clerk, an assistant, and a secretary, with an additional clerk for those committees empowered to appoint a sub-committee. This recommendation has been met. Like their predecessors, departmental committees may appoint any number of part time specialist advisers to assist them in their inquiries. Many men of great distinction in their particular fields of expertise have spared some of their time to give committees invaluable guidance in the past. The new committees are, without extravagance, making full use of part time advisers. Over seventy have been appointed so far.

Beyond this, Mr. St. John Stevas, when moving for the appointment of these committees, gave the assurance that if their work could be significantly enhanced by further resources they would be afforded them. The control of the House of Commons vote, moreover, is now vested in the House of Commons Commission and therefore is not subject to government control. The Commission has recently approved the appointment by some of the departmental Committees of a limited number of additional full time assistants with special qualifications on short term contracts. Other committees will no doubt be monitoring their usefulness. To advise the Commission on matters affecting select committees and to act as a clearing house for matters of concern to select committees in general a Liaison Committee has been appointed on which are represented, in all cases but one by their Chairmen, twenty-two major Commons select committees.

The membership of the new committees was a matter which exercised the Procedure Committee. Hitherto names have been put forward by the various party whips. The proposal now was that the Committee of Selection should propose the names. The House agreed to this initially for one session. It is not clear what result this will have. It is clear that the two major parties differed in the way the names of their proposed members were evolved and that the whole process delayed the committees getting to work by some six months, until the end of November 1979. The House has now made permanent the role of the Committee of Selection in regard to the departmental committees.

While the new Committees are more numerous than their predecessors, their structure has greater coherence and their staffing, while still modest in comparison with that, say, of congressional committees in the United

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States, has been strengthened, they have been given no fundamentally new powers. The new Committees are solely investigatory. They may take evidence, travel if necessary and make reports to the House. That is all. They have no executive powers and no essential place either in the legislative process or in the authorisation of the raising of taxes or of the expenditure of public money. Insofar as they looked to North America, the Procedure Committee found their model in Canada, not in the United States.

Lacking any leverage of the kind, for instance, which congressional committees can apply, it is at first sight surprising that so much more is expected of the new committees than was apparently achieved by their predecessors. Their only weapons are the power to question and the effectiveness of the arguments in their Reports with which they support their conclusions. Even then, faced with the pressures on the time of the House only a small minority of these Reports will be the subject of specific debate in the House although a fair number will from time to time be relevant to business coming before the House.

The expectation rests and depends on three main factors. First, before 1979 select committees were becoming more effective. From the early sixties onwards they more and more heard evidence in public rather than in private. This gave an impact and an immediacy to their proceedings. As they assembled evidence and tested the views of experts in the matters under review, that by itself influenced informed opinion. At the same time committees began to employ specialist advisers on a part time basis. They could, thus, obtain expert guidance, tailor-made for each inquiry. Ministers appeared more frequently to give evidence. While the overall coverage of committees was still haphazard, the Expenditure Committee, at least, had made a beginning at a systematic review of Government activity and the full extent of its impact was masked by the time taken for results to show. There was, then, a reasonable expectation that increased investment in select committees could lead to enhanced dividends. As the Procedure Committee expressed it, their aims could be achieved by evolutionary, rather than by revolutionary, change.

Second, the Government must show goodwill towards, or at least cooperate with, the new departmental committees. Select committees are given the power to send for persons, papers and records and this power is absolute as regards private persons and bodies. It is, however, severely limited in regard to state papers. Committees, moreover, cannot themselves secure the production of those papers which they can properly require by going, for example, directly to the courts. Their only course, if papers are refused or witnesses fail to attend, is to report the facts to the House, where, in normal circumstances, the Government commands a majority. There have in the past been occasions when departments have successfully refused to give Committees the papers which they have sought, and when ministers, invited to give evidence, have declined. Inquiries have been hampered and Members frustrated.

The demands of committees for memoranda and oral evidence have for some years made heavy demands on chronically overworked senior civil

servants in certain departments. The new departmental committees will inevitably place even more regular demands on all the major departments. This is a factor very much in the minds of civil servants and ministers and there were different views as to the desirability of embracing the new system. Now, the civil service is carefully monitoring the cost of meeting the committees' demands on departments and this is certainly influencing the response of the government to the wish of several committees to proliferate sub-committees. For all that, the present Government is committed to give the committees a fair wind. Ministers have responded readily to a greatly increased number of requests to give evidence and the government has undertaken to make available to select committees as much information as possible, including confidential information on the understanding that committees handle it accordingly.

This commitment must be read in the context of the essentially private processes of decision making by British governments. It is hedged by provisos which are set out in the Civil Service Department's Memorandum of Guidance for Government Officials called to give evidence to select committees. The Procedure Committee secured a copy of the then Memorandum of Guidance and published it with their report. The Memorandum was revised last year and made available to Members of Parliament. The chief grounds on which Departments should decline to provide evidence are stated to be: — that the cost of doing so would be excessive; that it would be prejudicial to national security; that it would undermine the collective responsibility of Ministers to disclose the advice given to Ministers by civil servants, or to reveal inter-departmental exchanges on policy issues or information about cabinet committees or their discussions; and that the advice given by Law Officers and information held in confidence concerning the private affairs of individuals or institutions should not be disclosed. In practice departments have on the whole been more forthcoming in providing evidence than hitherto. In observing the Government's guidelines, however, they have on occasion not given committees what they wanted. This will inevitably be an area of dispute, and not only at the margin. Access to information is central to the ability of the committees fully to secure the accountability of the executive to Parliament.

The current Memorandum of Guidance, while following fairly closely the lines of the earlier version, is more forthcoming in a potentially crucial particular. It is the established requirement that departments reply to Reports which deal with matters within their responsibility by way of written observations. There have, hitherto, on occasion been considerable delays, of a year or more, before replies to reports have been published. These delays have greatly diminished the effectiveness of any continuing dialogue on the subject which a committee might wish to have with a department. The Memorandum of Guidance, in response to a recommendation of the Procedure Committee, now requires departments to do their best to reply within two months and, where that is not possible to inform committees why, before the two months is up. In any case they must reply within six months. The full effects of this commitment have, of course, not yet been

fully felt. It does, however, indicate a willingness to maintain a dialogue. The departmental committees, moreover, are established by Standing Orders; no term is set to their continued existence and unlike, say, Royal Commissions they will not disappear once they have reported.

The third factor, if the new committees in conjunction with the Public Accounts Committee and the Committee on the Parliamentary Commissioners are to achieve what is expected of them, lies with the Members themselves. Members have conflicting claims on their time, and many of these claims, hitherto, have had greater party political significance than the, in some respects, bipartisan co-operation on select committees. At the same time the feeling that at times departments frustrated the work of committees led to a natural reluctance to throw good time after bad. As a result, Members have not always been willing to give committee work a high priority. If Members can be convinced that the new committees will achieve a greater respect than their predecessors and can secure from Departments a greater accountability, then they may well give greater priority to attending meetings, mastering committee papers and adding greater cogency to their questioning. Civil servants will answer honestly questions put to them. They cannot be expected, however, to volunteer information to their disadvantage. The onus rests on committees to ask the right questions.

With committees only a year into their work, it is too early to judge their performance. As the House sat on into August last year, the press delivered a succession of interim judgements. The consensus was that the Committees had begun well. They had regained for the Commons a little of the influence it had exercised in the halcyon days of the mid-nineteenth century. They had required ministers to account for the policies and actions of the departments; they had thrown light into dark corners; and had offered their own contributions to the solution of immediate problems.

Attendances of Members at committee meetings have in general been substantially higher than those in past sessions, and the work undertaken, committee for committee, greater. The Public Accounts Committee with all its well-merited prestige is forced by the nature of its work to be overwhelmingly an adverse critic. Departmental Committees, as some of their reports have already demonstrated, can endorse as well as criticise. If they are able to sustain their present momentum and level of work, convince departments that the inconvenience they will undoubtedly cause will be outweighed by the value of Parliamentary assessment, and perhaps act as catalysts for informed opinion on matters within their ambit, then the government of the day in addition to enjoying the confidence of the Commons, may be further strengthened by being a party to a systematic Parliamentary audit of its policies and actions.

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[Richard Lankester is Clerk of Select Committees.]

# 'ONCE MORE INTO THE BREACH. . .': TANZANIA'S 1979-81 POLITICAL ECONOMIC CRISIS

**by Reginald Herbold Green**

AS 1981 opens Tanzania is in the midst of a serious economic crisis. The position is better than a year ago but objectively remains both grave and with very problematic prospects for 1981. Does this matter? Is Tanzania notably different in this respect from a hundred other Third World countries hard hit by the New International Economic disorder? Why are the causes and the responses to the crisis of any interest and to whom?

First, it evidently matters to eighteen million Tanzanians and to those who, for whatever reason, are concerned for their welfare. Second, it matters for the Eastern and Southern African regions in which Tanzania is one of the strongest states and one of those with the greatest relative success in confronting its social and economic problems. Third, it is of interest precisely because Tanzania is in many respects typical of the majority of the smaller, poorer economies of the Third World. Fourth, because Tanzania has sought to build—however imperfectly—and advanced—however incompletely—a strategy toward equality, socialism, self-reliance, participation and external solidarity. The future survival or collapse of that effort has implications reaching well beyond Tanzania.

To paint a rosy picture of Tanzania today would be quite unrealistic—and quite contrary to all major Tanzania Presidential or Ministerial speeches of the past eighteen months. Basic commodities are in short supply with erratic gaps—especially upcountry. Amenities are totally unavailable, subject to long waits or purchased 'under the counter'. Black marketing (evidently involving middle manager-sub-wholesaler collusion) is no longer trivial. Corruption is much less uncommon than in 1973 and while less violent than—say—London, Dar es Salaam is faced with the armed criminals who usually follow demobilisation after a war. Nor can any easy, early escape from the crisis be foreseen. It is basically a foreign exchange trap with hard slog and repetitive fund raising the only course open to avoid its snapping even tighter. The 1980 drought and oil price burst have already falsified President Nyerere's hope that, after the eighteen hard months he then projected, would come some relief.

But it is also necessary to stress that the crisis has limits. No person has starved to death and none will. 1980 urban minimum wage increases and drought relief have, at least in part, protected the weakest social groups. Universal primary education, rural health care and pure water provision continue to advance even in austerity budgets. A year after the economy's collapse had seemed to many a matter of weeks away at the late October 1979 breakdown of IMF talks and resignation of the Minister of Finance, shortages are less and the foreign exchange position slightly better. Corruption and black marketing remain the exception not the

rule and an exception clearly opposed in fact as well as slogan.

Tanzania was in 1973-75 one of the 'most severely affected' countries —number three in the UN ranking. There is no space to discuss that experience in detail here[1] but it is critical to note two facts. Tanzania won its way back to fairly rapid growth and sustained structural change efforts but only at the cost of a near siege economy through 1976. The 1977-80 series of external blows thus fell on a tired country which had barely overcome a severe crisis.

The record of the past four years is one of a series of hammer blows. In 1977 the East African Community collapsed, forcing major replacement investment in transport and communications infrastructive. In 1977-78 the coffee price boom which had temporarily rescued the balance of payments collapsed. In 1978 Iddi Amin invaded Tanzania, leading to a first campaign of defence and a second of support for Uganda liberation forces followed by costly continuing provision of security forces to Uganda until its elections. In 1979 the second worst floods in twenty years ravaged transport facilities while in 1979/80 drought hit the short and long rains crops in half the country. 1979/80 oil price doubling took the cost of petroleum imports to 50% of export earnings as against under 10% in 1972. Over 1977-81 the total cost to Tanzania of these events will be of the order of £650 million. That is about a third of Tanzania's annual national production, one and a quarter times government recurrent expenditure, one and a half times fixed capital formation and twice total exports. About two thirds of these costs were borne in 1979 and 1980, about one fifth will come due in 1981—assuming no further shocks.

The external shocks have interacted with structural weaknesses. These —though identified—had not been overcome during 1972-76 because crisis management was a full time occupation, nor over 1978-79 because the war effort superseded economic management as the top priority. Export quantities peaked in 1966 and thereafter tended downward at 1 to 2% a year. This compounded the 1972-1979 30% worsening of the terms of trade (briefly reversed in the 1977 coffee boom) to cut the import capacity of 1980 export earnings to under two thirds that of 1973. From 1971 warnings were raised that self reliance required an export strategy—only earnings from exports carried no strings or creditors. But such a strategy could not pay off quickly, so was postponed over 1973-76, lost sight of over 1977-78 and only begun to be developed with firm political backing in 1980.

Imports of food and manufactured consumer goods have been reduced relative to national product and to total imports over 1966-79. However, the rise in fixed investment and in manufacturing plus fuel price changes have meant that the ratio of imports to national product has fallen little. As national product has risen over 4% a year since 1966, the squeeze on the balance of payments has been extreme. In 1966 exports covered 105% of imports, in 1973 80%, in 1978 44%, and in 1979 and 1980 53%. While loans and grants rose, they could not bridge the gap, especially in 1974-75, and from 1978 onward.

Agricultural development is an area which encompasses both

Tanzania's greatest successes and problems. Food output is on a 3½% or better annual growth trend (over 5% for 1974-1979) but inadequately detailed strategy means that wheat, rice, oilseed, milk and sugar supply grows at best as rapidly as demand, leaving substantial deficits. Higher prices have improved rural-urban terms of trade but inadequately worked out relative prices have contributed to uneconomic surpluses of some food crops and the decline of industrial and export crop production by 1½% a year.

Unfortunate experiments with central silos and tarpaulins—as opposed to village and regional warehouses—as the main storage mode have prevented building up adequate reserves and led to substantial spoilage. The success of the National Milling Corporation in procuring food has led directly to a collapse of physical and financial control with losses of £100 million—of a Chrysler order of magnitude for Tanzania. Development villages have created workable self-government units, better health and water development, many effective communal shops and small scale infrastructive construction. They have not to date had much overall impact (positive or negative) on output and do require alteration of land use patterns for ecological protection.

The 1974-75 Villageisation preserved the possibility of continued rural progress. The 1975-76 food production and procurement-centred agricultural strategy averted the spectres of starvation and bankruptcy. But by 1978 both required major reformulation to overcome the problems and take the next steps required by their own success. In easier circumstances they would have received it—in fact war and foreign exchange crises diverted attention, and lack of attention deepened the foreign exchange crises. The failures were of timing, of capitalising on opportunities, of bad luck as to external shocks, not of initially incoherent strategy or lack of action, but the results were still serious.

The build up of the 1979 crisis began in 1978. Import allocations were set unsustainably high and not cut rapidly enough after coffee prices collapsed. The 1978/79 Budget was lax. A bumper harvest completed the collapse of NMC physical and financial control. The Amin invasion turned an already serious foreign exchange, government budget, credit and price context into a nightmare; at the same time it prevented giving priority to its resolution. Tanzania's first recurrent budget deficit in 1978/79 of £100 million (over 20% of total spending) was followed by an unsound 1979/80 budget. Delayed foreign exchange allocation cuts failed to halt the melting of reserves and piling up of commercial arrears. NMC's rake's progress continued unchecked. Until June 1979, the realities were those of a country at war and—given the actual and potential outside support for Amin—facing real threats to survival; not a situation conducive to strengthening managerial or fiscal performance.

Negotiations with the International Monetary Fund over 1978/79 brought some drawings and an early 1979 devaluation. At the end of October attempts to arrange a major drawing collapsed in anger. President Nyerere viewed the proposed conditions of a major devaluation, substantial social service cuts and dismantling of foreign exchange, credit

and price management as an attempt to force Tanzania to substitute dependence, raw capitalism and inegalitarianism for self reliance, socialism and equality. In uncharacteristically harsh language he condemned the IMF, notably in a New Year's address to the diplomatic corps.

Economic management was given top priority. A new Treasury team headed by Amir Jamal was soon joined by new Ministers of Commerce and of Planning. For the first few months halting the decline and surviving were the full-time tasks and results were unclear. Arrears continued to rise and import cuts throttled output—especially in manufacturing which fell 25% from early 1979 to early 1980. With manufacturing's fall came a revenue fall, worsening the initially unsound budgetary position. NMC price reform came in January and the decision to decentralise and reconstruct in May but these could do little to reduce 1979/80 losses. Shortages grew until December, with little improvement visible until April 1980. Inflation surged from the 8-10% annual rates of mid-1975 to mid-1979 to 20% or more.

But from mid-1980 results could be seen. Shortages had eased to some extent. The Recurrent Budget deficit had been cut from 1978/79 and measures to reduce the gap to £17.5 million in 1980/81 taken in the new budget (which was on target as of the end of September). Credit planning had been improved and control made real, albeit at the cost of a severe squeeze in late 1980. NMC reorganisation had begun. An export strategy existed on paper with some aspects already under implementation. Improved foreign exchange budgeting—and some increase in availability —had loosened some of the worst production (and revenue) bottlenecks. A three-year interim programme had been prepared and work begun toward the next five year planning cycle.

Within most ministries and public enterprises the mood had changed. Near despair had given way to renewed determination and incipient fatalism to modest hope. The same appeared to be true of the urban worker on the shopfloor or consumer in the shop—rural morale, surprisingly, had remained relatively high even in 1979.

Tanzania has over the past year sought to mobilise balance of payments support grants and loans to finance key imports with the shilling proceeds paid into the capital budget. This has been successful—from £7.5 million in 1978/79, such finance rose to £32.5 million in 1979/80 and will exceed £50 million in 1980/81. Response has varied from highly positive (Federal Germany, Scandinavia, Netherlands, Algeria, Iraq, Switzerland) to basically negative (USA, USSR, France, UK). Similarly World Bank response, while critical on several energy and food sector credits, has been slow on a key structural adjustment loan needed to underwrite a medium term adjustment programme including export development.

The renewed IMF negotiations represented at least a partial success for Tanzania. £100 million in drawings were agreed. There was no devaluation, price-credit-foreign exchange planning remains central, social services were maintained and the minimum wage raised. While inadequate to raise imports much, the credit does allow a reduction in arrears

and payment of maturing earlier IMF drawings and provides a small leeway for contingencies.

What can be said in terms not of efforts or intentions but of results? Tanzania's economy and society have survived—not a trivial achievement. But there is a continuing crisis. Manufacturing output has clawed back to early 1979 levels and—given normal weather—the food production trend is sound. But shortages remain. The shortages are contained. No one is starving, basic goods can usually be secured at legal prices. But there are gaps, queueing and black markets. Security has improved, corruption remains the exception. But the situation is still worse than in 1977 and substantially worse than in 1973.

The minimum wage and crop price increases should largely halt erosion of real incomes of the poorest Tanzanians. But these remain below 1973 levels and for salary earners (£1,000-£3,000 a year, the latter the top level for e.g., the University Vice Chancellor and Central Bank Govérnor) the declines are over 50%. Basic public services and build-up of middle level person power continue to advance. But shortages of spares, books, fuel, drugs and paper threaten the smooth running of the former and gaps—e.g., book-keepers and accountants—plague the latter. Economic planning and management is visibly improved—in some cases to new highs. But serious gaps remain and the overall quality at middle level is still below acceptable standards.

Tanzanians appear to share this mixed but on the whole positive view. Morale is better than a year ago. Many leaders, officials and managers show commitment and competence. New initiatives arise from varied—and sometimes unexpected—sources.

The 1980 election was seen as a vote of confidence (or no confidence). With 80% of the potential electorate registered, over 70% voting, and an initial average of over 30 candidates per seat, it did not suffer from apathy. The President's vote share of 93% (down from 94%) hardly suggests disillusion with the 1967-80 strategy. Nor can the re-election with wide majorities of all five major economic ministers standing be read other than as approval of 1979/80 efforts and results. That is particularly true, in that over 50% of back benchers lost their seats, confirming both that freedom of choice existed and that voters were critical of middle level performance.

Compared to its neighbours Tanzania has done relatively well. It has the second best (best over 1975-78) food production growth record of the eight and the best performance on literacy, basic health, pure water and primary education. Six have higher rates of inflation and worse shortages of basic goods. In six of its eight neighbours, Tanzania's currency is at a premium on the black market.

Zaire and Uganda are polities and societies in near disintegration. Rwanda and Burundi are poorer and more stagnant. Zambia faces far graver social and economic problems. Mozambique's situation is in many respects comparable. Kenya (and to a slightly lesser extent Malawi) faces different but no less grave problems—dependent capitalism blocked by world crisis is no better than transition to socialism similarly constrained,

but its problems are not the same. This comparison is in one sense cold comfort to Tanzanians. But it does suggest that, in terms of results, Tanzania's strategy and management are as adequate for facing crises as those of its neighbours and, in most cases, rather to very much more so.

To project for Tanzania is in large measure to guess the weather, the effect of the Gulf War on oil supplies and prices, the course of the New International Economic Disorder. But fiscally and managerially Tanzania is on a much sounder footing than a year ago and can be expected to make progress. A coherent medium term strategy exists in most key areas, including exports, and articulation of a complete approach to agriculture has been begun with some pieces in place. 1981 should, therefore, see a rise in output. While the foreign exchange position will remain critical it will at least be better than the week to week survival scramble of late 1979. Cautious optimism does not seem out of place.

True, analytically the situation remains grave. But that was even more true in 1974 with the drought/oil crisis, in 1978 with the Amin invasion, in 1979 with total international bankruptcy apparently in sight. Tanzania has repeatedly disappointed prophets of collapse and rebuked (by example) timid advocates. The survival of any state committed to participation, equity, self reliance, transition to socialism and solidarity is always problematic. When achieving any of them also requires massive structural change and growth from an initial per capita output of £75, the dangers and difficulties are greatly enhanced. With the unfavourable international economic setting, they may have become unsurmountable.

But the Tanzanian case to date suggests that survival and progress are possible. The costs in terms of austerity and discipline are high. Any combination of external shocks and internal mistakes threatens collapse. But over 1979/80 Tanzania has shown a capacity to correct errors, to mobilize effort and not merely to survive but to plan for progress. No simple transposition from one context to another is ever possible but that record is not totally irrelevant to other Third World societies.

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NOTES:

[1] A full presentation is by B. Van Arkadie, D. Rwegasira, R. H. Green, *Economic Shocks and National Policy Making: Tanzania in the 1970s*, Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, 1980.

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[Dr. Green is a Professorial Fellow of the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex. He served as Economic Adviser to the Tanzania Treasury from 1966-74 and April-September 1980. However, the views expressed in this article are his personal responsibility and are not necessarily those of the Tanzania Treasury.]

# POEM

## ROOK

*To my Father, the artist Tom Malone*

And on the edge
of the fading field
a hood man lands
from above like a priest,
gripping the tree
to prevent its escape
with his black creased hands;
and his nails pierce
its hopeless upward climb—
pinning the outstretched
lines to the sky—
as he stands like a hieroglyph
waiting to fly into meaning.
All the shapes he can take
he prunes with the pen
of his beak as it plunges
the entries of jet that are held
in the pages of feathers outstretched
with your secrets.
One's of a cypher
that crumbles to darkness,
waving in chase
as the sun rolls away,
while others are shifting
upon the high branches
to dress for the night
and forsake the lost day;
and one holds a globe
of circadian stillness—
the eye in his head
that might mirror your sight—
an unwoken black tear
in a black feather bed
dreaming away
all the castles of light.

NICK MALONE

# GAINSBOROUGH

## by Cyril Fradan

*. . . who so ingeniously contrived to cover his defects by his beauties. . .*[1]

HOW do we recognise what we feel to be a flaw or defect in a painting? If our egocentricity permits it we try not to say: 'I do not see things in that way therefore the artist is wrong.' Rather do we have to compare one part of the work with the pattern, or logic, set up by the other parts. This can then be referred to our recollection of other examples by the same author. An abberation from an implied logic, the 'style', jars, and is seen as a flaw. 'Style', depending on the character of the artist, may not be consistent over a long period. Development may be marked by sudden changes or by slow progression. The former is more often attributable to an external influence adopted consciously or unconsciously. This was very marked in recent times when new categories of fashionable painting-styles followed closely upon each other and artists could, and did, consider a change from Abstract Expressionism to Minimalism to be a 'development'.

Each new category of art presupposes a 'style' of its own in order for it to be recognised and distinguished from other kinds of painting. In some historical, classical periods a style has been widely accepted by artists and responsive public alike. Change, if any, is slow. 'Schools' arose to favour the mannerism of some germinal artist, say, Michelangelo or Raphael, but they still belonged to an overriding aesthetic. Here we can seek defects in terms of the individual's mannerisms and those of the larger, socially accepted style of the period. The followers, who may have adopted a technique or a style from the leaders, may be assessed by reference to their source. They are the kind of artists of whom it may frequently be said that they have a fine technique but nothing to say.

The problem has not been rendered easier, latterly, by the confusion between style and content, or subject-matter. People speak of an abstract or figurative style. There is also a tendency in contemporary work to use conflicting elements within a painting especially for the disturbance they cause the onlooker. Distortions, however, as jarring as they might seem in themselves, may, within the ideal framework of the painter's vision or style, become part of an harmonious unity. Whatever you might think of, say, Picasso's cubist portrait of Kahnweiler, it is stylistically whole. To have introduced an eye in the manner of Ingres into such a canvas would have been to have flawed it.

As may be realised from the Gainsborough Exhibition at the Tate Gallery, London, the volatile Gainsborough never entirely resolved or reconciled all the problems arising from technical considerations, stylistic influences and his own individual originality. His was a spontaneous talent in a period of academicism. The conflicting elements of his own 'odd scratches and marks'[2] and the highly 'finished' works demanded by the taste (style) of the day, added to his own lackadaisical character,

which made it hard for him to actually complete many works, let alone solve the difficulties of stylistic unity, must have seemed beyond resolution.

The quality of the paint-material he used and the way in which he manipulated it are beyond criticism. The paintings nearly all retain a clarity and intensity of colour and are remarkably free of craquelures, especially when compared with many of Reynolds' canvasses where he used bituminous-based pigments. What could not Morris Louis, in our own day, learn from the superb application of transparent glazes in Gainsborough's canvases?

The movement of his hand, in response to his inner vision, creates his, or any other painter's, recognisable autograph. This may be scarcely noticeable as with Ingres or Photo-realists, or it might pass through a whole comparative gamut until, in Abstract Expressionism it was said to be the *raison d'être* of the painting. A dashing, spontaneous style marked the Pompeians before the destruction of that city. Much nearer to Gainsborough in time was Magnasco whose agitated landscapes and 'histories' were unique. Gainsborough was fairly restrained compared to him and introduced his own intensity of colour through his transparencies, even though they often robbed his portrayals, especially of trees, of their solidity.

Not having had 'the assistance of an academical education . . . or any of those preparatory studies which have been so often recommended',[3] there were many insecurities in Gainsborough's treatment of his subjects, human, animal and vegetable. Some of the weaknesses are to be seen throughout his career, therefore implying that he never took the trouble to improve or correct himself even though it is evident that he could, sometimes, express these elements well.

The structure of the human nostril caused him much perplexity. Sometimes he just gave up as in the portrait of a 'Girl stroking a Greyhound' (c. 1760. Private Collection. Cat. 93). Hands were another major problem. His ineptitude is to be seen throughout his career. In the portrait of his daughters chasing a butterfly (c. 1756. National Gallery. Cat. 62) Mary's left hand is no more than a deformed paw, the drawing of which betrays his lack of understanding of its structure. Note, too that the clear pentimento in Margaret's left shoulder shows that the original line would have been more anatomically convincing them the corrected one. Arms are often much too long. In 'Mary, Duchess of Richmond' (c. 1786. National Trust, Rothschild Coll. Ascot. Cat. 134), the arms are too long while the lower legs are too short. Parmigianino or El Greco would have created a whole new set of proportions which would have been in agreement with each other. Gainsborough never had the courage or perseverance to carry his tendencies through to their conclusion. 'I am,' he said of himself, 'the most inconsistent, changeable being, so full of fitts and starts.'

In the portrait of Thomas John Medlicott (1763. Private Coll. Cat. 95), he was completely vanquished by the complexities of foreshortening and fragmented lighting which he had set out to render. And look at the relationship between his son-in-law Johann Christian Fischer and his

harpsichord (1780. Queen's Gallery. Cat. 126). In order to support his resting arms the instrument has not only to be impossibly high but the top is made to slope downwards!

His use of dressed-up dolls as models must account for the gauche portrait of Heneage Lloyd and his Sister (1750s. Fitzwilliam Museum, Camb. Cat. 58). Their stiff stances, uncertain centres of gravity, angularly hooked arms all indicate the use of dolls—not even lay-figures which have more versatility. And this is not even to refer to the crude drawing of the balustrade behind them and the mirror pond in the toy landscape.

Apparently he was given to constructing miniature landscape from bits of mirror, stones and herbs. This could account for many elements in his landscapes, especially the trees like pressed parsley, by which I mean their lack of volume and the proportion of leaf to the whole. This impression is increased by the transparency of the leaves which robs them of substance. Their vitality, suggested by the spontaneity of the style, is never consistently used. The direct approach to 'landskips' frequently gave way as the influences of his sources, Hobbema, Ruysdael etc. asserted themselves. Even his 'fancy' paintings of silvan and rustic scenes never resolved this problem.

Gainsborough himself must have been seduced by the effects of his own brush, leaving certain passages be even where they are in obvious conflict with the rest of the treatment of the canvas. An obvious example is the thickly-impasted yellow in the sky of the 'Cottage Door with Children Playing' (c. 1778. Cincinnati Art Museum. Cat. 142). The Catalogue says that it has been applied with 'an unprecedented looseness of touch'. It is not at all unprecedented as similar brushwork is to be found in other paintings, notably the dramatic highlight on Margaret's apron in the portrait of his daughters chasing a butterfly already referred to. He was just not interested in integrating either into the whole.

Similarly the sparkling lights on the excavated surfaces in 'Landscape with Sand Pit' (1746/7. National Gallery of Ireland. Cat. 77), create a feeling of something liquid and heaving—far more so than the waves in any of his marine efforts where the water seems stodgy and glutinous to the point of solidity.

If one had had to write a school report on Gainsborough one would have been forced into such common-places as: 'Could do very well if he applied himself' or 'Thomas shows great promise but lacks concentration.' Mostly he could not be bothered. So the question arises as to how much indulgence we should allow a genius where, to paraphrase Thomas Alva Edison, the one percent inspiration is present but the ninety-nine percent perspiration are not all there?

For me, Gainsborough never quite succeeds in covering his defects by his beauties. His genius was limited by his own weaknesses of character so that he never achieved a fusion of all his skills into a stylistic unity. In some works he came close to achieving this. That he could, from time to time, actually resolve many of his deficiencies only serves to aggravate the impact of his lapses. He *could*, at times portray noses and hands to

perfection, and he could make the arms proportionate to the body. What he could never quite do was to treat both figure and landscape in the same free and direct manner. This dichotomy was present from start to finish.

Every painter or sculptor has to make a compromise between his materials (and his ability to command them) and the object he wishes to create. He must come to terms with his own strengths and weaknesses. He who succeeds most has also most resolved this conflict. We do not demand of a Delacroix that he should be a Dufy, nor vice versa.

Had Gainsborough lived in the late nineteenth or twentieth centuries he might have felt free to liberate his figures as he liberated his backgrounds (but not his 'landskips'). Being of the 18th century he must have felt very constrained by the demands of his sitters and his contemporaries for a likeness. So, in comparison with the backgrounds, the heads are more 'finished'—and sometimes painstakingly so.

It must be said that, unlike John Singer Sargent, Gainsborough's talent was realised when he became a fashionable portraitist. His reputation, as far as I am concerned, would not be one whit diminished if all his landscapes were to disappear at this moment.

His best works achieve a faerie enchantment, especially those images of women where wuthered hair and agitated gauze help to form a unity with the lively foliage and bark-textures. I am thinking particularly of 'Mary, Duchess of Richmond', 'Mrs. Richard Brinsley Sheridan' (1785/6. National Gallery, Washington. Cat. 129), the pallid Mrs. Siddons against a crimson drape which swirls like a sunset sky, or, in a different style, the noble and dignified 'Mary, Duchess of Montagu' (1768. Coll. Duke of Buccleuch and Queensbury. Cat. 100).

Character and vivacity and vitality mark all the portraits. There is the immediately sympathetic Henry, Duke of Buccleuch (1770. Coll. Duke of Buccleuch and Queensbury. Cat. 103), the whimsical Elizabeth Tyler (c. 1773. Private Collection. Cat. 106), and the good-humoured William Pearce who can hardly suppress a smile (c. 1780. Private Collection. Cat. 127).

It is these beauties which can beguile us away from the defects and make us more tolerant of them even if they do not quite succeed in making us forget them.

There is an aspect of this exhibition raised by a note in the Catalogue which I must comment upon.

It has become an established convention in recent times to seek socio-economic commentary in the artefacts of any historical period. This can sometimes reach pinnacles of the ridiculous as in the November Bulletin of the English National Opera where *Madame Butterfly* is described as 'Puccini's tragic tale of the Japanese child-bride and the effects of American Imperialism.' Some works, including such operas as Henze's *We Come to the River* or Berg's *Wozzeck* are openly propagandistic. Mostly the pill, following Sir Philip Sidney's dictum, is sugared.

Any artefact, even the most simple, is capable of analysis from many specialised points of view. What one has to try to understand is the over-riding intention of the author himself.

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John Hayes, author of the catalogue to the present exhibition, writes, of a drawing of a villa in a park which shows gentry strolling on a terrace while a shepherd-boy sits on the sward below within sight of some sheep: 'The shepherd boy reclining at the foot of the flight of steps may be intended to point the contrast with the gentility of the family on the terrace.' This is specious. Shepherds, cow-herds and other rustics, along with livestock and vegetation, were as much 'furniture' in the countryside at that time as the gentry were among the tables and chairs of their salons. Both Virgil and Sannazaro, the two major influences in the concept of Ideal Landscape, make this natural association of those who tend animals and their charges in any 'Arcadian' setting. The eighteenth century had certainly not forgotten such ideals, witness Kent and Brown and, of course, Marie Antoinette and her Hameau at Versailles.

Gainsborough painted 'The Blue Boy' in 1770. In 1771, according to Trevelyan, British slave-ships transported 50,000 miserable Africans. Gainsborough lived through the Gordon Riots of 1780, the American Civil War, the war with Holland. How much of this could objectively be said to exist in his painting? Implicit in his images of the squires in their parks and fields is the expression of the extensive Enclosure Acts of the period, the consequent enrichment of the landowners and impoverishment and dispossession of the peasants. I do not, however, see any reason to believe that it was Gainsborough's intention to point this out in any way. If he were as conscious of rural decay and decadence among the working classes as Hogarth had been about the urban poor, surely this would have become apparent in his 'fancy' paintings of the agricultural labourers.

Gainsborough's peasants are well-fed and nearly all high-spirited and rosy-cheeked. (Exception made for the two superb drawings of Woodmen in his exhibition.) They work in the fields, flirt, tumble in heaps of happy childhood before humble but welcoming cottages. Sometimes they look pathetic as in 'The Cottage Girl with Dog and Pitcher' (1785. Collection Sir Alfred Beit Bt. Cat. 139). This is one of his most accomplished paintings even though it is more 'finished' and less 'direct' than many others. This is really the evocation of wistful childhood. There is no reason to believe that being poor has made her sad although our contemporary conventional ethos would *want* us to believe it—to ascribe to both painter and subject what we *want* them to have felt. Although the girl is plump and rosy she is in rags and goes barefoot. Her face and hands and feet are, nevertheless, clean. This is no Waterbaby before its time. I have seen African children more ragged than this but much more gay and full of fun than children in welfare societies. This is not to say that poverty is romantically justified, only that it is not, per se, misery.

Some knowledge which is peripheral to given works of art should be put aside. How often did Gainsborough's personages wash? Did they smell? How many of the men had the pox and passed it on to their elegant brides? Most, perhaps, exploited the labouring classes; should we therefore throw down their images? Clearly Gainsborough, who might have been unwashed himself by our standards, did not have these or other political

or religious ideas to propagate. Any work of art implies more omissions than it demonstrates inclusions. To seek to read in them what the author has consciously or unconsciously left out is to falsify the work. You may find the work impoverished, or enhanced by the artist's choice. Not for Gainsborough the mythologising dramatisations of Reynolds or the theatrical (in the best sense) paintings of then contemporary events by Copley; no references to the growing technological skills which heralded the Industrial Revolution. Only a Maoist 'Cultural Revolution' would condemn him for missing out on this surge into the future. Only an unthinking adherence to contemporary conventions would seek a socio-economic significance in Gainsborough's resting shepherd-boy.

One last matter raised by this exhibition. I realise the difficulties of achieving good colour-reproductions even while not condoning that they should be quite as unfaithful to the originals as they generally are in the expensive catalogues offered for sale. But why should the monochrome reproductions also be quite as poor in quality as those in this catalogue? Tonal values go entirely astray and details are irretrievably lost in blackness. There can be no excuse for this.

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1 Sir Joshua Reynolds; *Fourteenth Discourse.*
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
All the catalogue numbers quoted refer to the present exhibition at the Tate Gallery, London.

# THE RING ROAD

## by John Elsom

WHEN Greg moved into Bucklestone, he couldn't believe it. 'It's an archaeological site,' he said to his girl friend, Pam. 'You'd better not tell them we're not married. They'd ban us from the post office.' Pam smiled contentedly, biding her time. 'It's a very pretty cottage,' she said. 'And *cursed*,' grinned Greg. 'Can you believe it? Cursed.'

Cursed was a slight exaggeration but Greg had been talking to the locals. 'It's got a history as long as your leg,' he said, demonstrating, 'murrains, murders, plague and the pox. No wonder the butcher doesn't deliver'. 'That's all right,' said Pam. 'You can do the shopping for me.' 'I'm here to work, you know.' 'Oh, yes?' said Pam. 'Yes,' said Greg. 'It'll get you out of the house then,' said Pam, putting a pot of wild flowers into the inglenook, 'away from distractions.'

It had all worked out very nicely. Greg had passed his finals with flying colours and was embarked on his thesis, Rural Development in Eighteenth Century Britain. He taught for two days a week at Bristol University, sixty miles away, while Pam stayed behind, putting up wallpaper and shelves. She was very practical, but she didn't quite know what she wanted to do with her life. She was still thinking about it. She looked forward to Greg's return every week, because they had such a great time, but she never minded when he went away, because it gave her the chance to catch up on her chores. It was a perfect arrangement.

'It was never cursed at all,' she told Greg authoritatively one weekend, 'but a witch used to live here. She did all the cursing. I've been talking to the vicar.' 'Who did she curse?' asked Greg. 'Everybody. The lot. Only it was a very strange curse. It could have been a blessing. Even the vicar doesn't know. He's a forward-looking man. He thinks she could have been a saint in disguise. He's very worried because she's buried outside the graveyard. He wants her bones moved.' 'It's a lot of rubbish,' said Greg.

If it hadn't have been for his thesis, Greg would have been bored with Bucklestone after a month, and then there would have been rows with Pam, who liked it there. As it was, he would come back every morning with stories about how reactionary the place was. 'You know that old bugger with the dog? Everybody calls him the Brigadier. I mean, the Brigadier!' 'So?' asked Pam. 'Well, isn't it typical? There's Sir So-and-so Whatsit and his three debby daughters at the manor, there's old Bill who runs the pub, there's *Miss* Knightley the frustrated haberdasher and Adams the bankrupt corn-merchant.' 'So?' repeated Pam. 'It's the class structure of the place,' explained Greg earnestly, 'It's all intact. You don't suppose they'd call him Adams if he had any money, do you? They'd call him Mr. Adams, like Mr. Harris at the bank. Dropping the Mr. is like warning you not to lend him a quid, poor sod. And now there's a bloody Brigadier

who lives in a mock-Tudor monstrosity up the hill, with a collie called Rover!' 'Well,' said Pam, peacefully, 'it's very good for your research.'

And it was. In 1961, when they first came, Bucklestone was a perfectly preserved eighteenth-century village in Sedgmoor, a cluster of well-proportioned yellow-stone cottages around a market square, beside the river Wey. The names on the shops were the same as those on the gravestones; and it was really very lucky that their cottage was cursed, because nobody wanted to live there. All the other cottages were tied into complicated family arrangements, kept as dowries, held in trusts, reserved for farm workers. But their cottage was free from all that, larger than the others, and cheap, with a good garden. It was the only spare cottage in the district.

After they'd lived there for about a year, Greg came in one lunchtime, looking excited. 'I've been talking to the vicar,' he said. 'We've been looking up the parish records. We're living in the house of a revolutionary hero.' 'Are we?' said Pam, dishing up the cheese-and-celery soufflé which hadn't quite worked. 'Yes,' said Greg. 'Apparently in the 1830s this cottage belonged to a family called the Cobbits, and Jack Cobbit led a revolt against the Corn Laws, which was quite ruthlessly stamped out. He was hanged in the market square, all his brothers were pushed off to Australia, and his widow, Jessie, that's the witch, lived here until 1892.' 'On her own?' asked Pam. 'Well, almost,' said Greg. 'She had five illegitimate sons. She must have been the local whore as well.' 'That must have been nice for her,' said Pam, deciding that this was not one of her better days.

'I've found out something else,' Greg went on. 'You know the Brigadier? I think he's distantly related. I think she was his great-aunt.' 'Bully for him,' said Pam, scraping the soufflé into the pail beneath the sink. 'I know something else. I know about the curse.' Pam looked round, interested in spite of herself. 'What was it?' she asked. 'Well, you'll have to be nice to me,' said Greg, and kissed her. Pam shivered. 'Another time,' she said.

Pam wanted to get married. She'd been thinking about it for months. What would happen, she thought, when Greg finished his thesis? He'd be off to some university like a shot and Heaven knows what would happen to her. She dreaded his better days, when he'd sit in his study, humming contentedly to himself, having made some great discovery about wool prices in 1748. 'I should have kept up my career,' she thought, 'I've only myself to blame.' Although she blamed him a little as well, and every frigid cow in the world who kept her legs closed until a wedding ring opened them.

Greg's thesis, meanwhile, was in a state where he didn't want to talk about it. 'I don't want to talk about it,' he would say to anyone who would listen. 'It's a vast subject!' The subject had of course, narrowed since the early days, to The Draining of Sedgmoor, then The Bucklestone Wool Mart, and finally The Hanging of Jack Cobbit, a title which, he reflected, might not get him a professorship but stood a good chance of a film contract. 'It's still a *vast* subject,' he told everyone, as he took on

more teaching. Pam was pregnant now and he knew that, sooner or later, he'd have to do the decent thing by her. And why not? For heaven's sake! They got on well enough.

On the night of their marriage, at a registry office in Bristol, Pam asked him about Jessie's curse. 'Oh that?' he said, bored with the matter. 'Well, she warned her neighbours not to expect "frost or foul weather, or the changing of seasons, or death, or life".' 'I think that's lovely,' said Pam, snuggling into him. 'Well, it's bloody true,' said Greg, staring at the ceiling, 'I mean, *nothing's* changed.'

Greg wasn't going to stick in Bucklestone. He was sure of that. Or rather, if he had to stick in Bucklestone, if he absolutely had to, he was doing to shake the place up a bit. 'It's so feudal,' he told Pam. 'The gentry tell the farmers how to vote, Tory of course, and the farmers instruct their tenants in the tied cottages to vote Tory. It's written into their leases.' What particularly annoyed Greg though was that insidiously he was getting acclimatised. Every morning he would walk down to the village to get his paper and meet the Brigadier, strolling his dog from the opposite direction. The Brigadier would nod graciously, 'Good morning', and he would reply, 'Morning, Brigadier', is a voice which never seemed quite under control, either too aggressive or too cheaply cheerful. 'If it goes on like this,' Greg thought, 'I'll be touching my forelock.'

While Pam grew more preoccupied with the baby, the cottage and the latest cost-effective, nutrition-wise recipe, probably with leeks, Greg grew somewhat desperate. He would stare at his still unfinished thesis every morning and say to himself, 'It's got to change,' though what and how he did not know. He would pore over the papers for the slightest glimmer of escape; but all that caught his eye was that the Liberal Party were doing rather well in the West Country. The Liberals were the local firebrands, with Jeremy Thorpe in Devon (North) and Bonham Carter at Torrington. The Liberals were the ones denounced from pulpits, for befriending the poor. Greg, rarely a joiner, joined.

'They can do with a trained economist,' he thought, 'and a rural historian. I'm exactly what they need.' He formed what he called the Bucklestone cell, with Adams the corn-merchant and a young GP, Dr. Prinsett, who was a part-time lecturer at Bristol, like him. Greg though was in charge, resolved to lead from the front; and as his first canvassing assignment, he decided to take his campaign into the heart of enemy territory, the Brigadier and his dog.

His doorstep speech was pat, his confidence high. 'Good morning,' he said with no class uncertainty, as the Brigadier creaked open the door, 'I'm representing the local Liberal Party'; and swung into Plan 2. Plan 1 covered the eventuality that the Brigadier might shut the door quickly, in which case Gregg had decided to return to the village, the logical course of action. But the Brigadier stood, bolt upright, stroking his white moustache, gazing down the hill to the village; and listened. And Greg went on talking, fluently at first, then with longer and longer pauses, and the Brigadier still said nothing, unless his habit of shifting from foot

to foot amounted to a comment. Eventually, when Greg was searching for ways to say goodbye without admitting that the encounter had been waste of time, the Brigadier looked up and said, 'Well, you'd better come in'; and showed him into a living room with chintz armchairs and bookcases whose contents, from a quick glance, seemed entirely devoted to butterfly collecting.

The Brigadier left him there for a moment, with the collie standing guard—'We don't bite, you, know, unless we have to'—and returned with a brown pot of tea and two mugs on a silver tray. 'My housekeeper only comes on Tuesday and Fridays,' the Brigadier explained. 'My wife, of course, died last year. Sugar?' 'So this is how the other half lives,' thought Greg, as he helped himself. The Brigadier then sat down in the most uncomfortable chair in the room and said, 'Now where were we?'

Greg started again, less confident this time but more impassioned, not wishing to waste the opportunity; and again the Brigadier just listened, and looked out of the window, and at his shoes, and occasionally stroked the dog; and finally, when Greg had given up all hope of elevating what had by now become an hour-long lecture in Greg's Liberalism, the Brigadier asked a question. 'What I don't understand is how you Liberals square your policy for regional devolution with your proposed membership of the EEC.'

Greg was taken aback. He had expected something more bigoted, a diatribe against you young people who did not know what was good for them. He stammered an answer, and stewed, and the Brigadier with another question turned up the heat. The Brigadier wanted to know about methods of proportional representation, not Greg's strong point, the defining of constituencies, the shifts of power implied in them, the relationship between economic and political power, defence, until at last, Greg, all confidence gone, blurted out, 'Look, I don't know all the answers. Nor does anyone else. I just know, I *know*, that the time has come for change,'—at which point, the Brigadier got up and lightly quoted from Oscar Wilde, 'I expect that you have many more calls of a similar nature to pay.'

It was a glorious summer day as Greg walked back to the village and on to his cottage; but he was too furious and frustrated to notice. 'He was just playing a game,' he told Pam. 'He was wasting my time. It's a typical Tory trick!' 'You won't be a Tory, will you,' said Pam to the baby, who burped. 'You'll be a socialist like your father'. 'A Liberal,' corrected Greg furiously,' and if he grows up in this dump, he'll be a fascist.'

Greg nearly gave up politics after that, but Adams and Dr. Prinsett kept him going; and then something rather odd happened. It was 1964, General Election time, and the Conservatives had booked the Moot Hall to introduce their new candidate, a young man of impeccable breeding and connections, the cousin, as Greg acidly pointed out, of Sir So-and-so Whatsit at the manor. The Brigadier, as everybody knew, was seriously ill with cancer. He had survived one operation already and was due for another; but he came down to the meeting, white-faced, clutching his

stick, and sat through all the speeches. Just as the chairman was about to wind up, the Brigadier got to his feet. 'I hope that everybody in this hall realises,' he said, 'that the ballot box is secret. Nobody, *nobody* can tell you how to vote.'

It caused a village sensation. The Chairman could only thank him for his contribution but everybody knew what he was talking about and guessed that the Brigadier had broken ranks. Adams told Greg, who was not at the meeting. 'It must have been that talking-to you gave him.' 'Well,' said Greg dubiously, 'it was a hard canvas.' 'It did the trick though,' said Adams, 'I reckon he's on our side.' 'It's a pity,' said Dr. Prinsett, when he heard about it, 'that he's not long for this world.'

Greg decided to pay the Brigadier another visit. The housekeeper showed him into the bedroom, where the Brigadier lay, exhausted by yesterday's effort, propped up by pillows, with the collie licking his hand. This time, however, the Brigadier was in a mood to talk, and Greg to listen, and he described the neighbourhood, the private rivalries, who owns whom, the state of the nation, the threats to world peace, giving Greg what amounted to a briefing on how to cope with the future. The Brigadier even talked about his great-aunt, Jessie the witch. 'She really did curse us, you know. None of us lives, none of us dies. We're all in a state of suspended animation. When the bomb drops, we won't fry, we won't notice.' And Greg listened, boggle-eyed, until he finally asked the question which most concerned him. 'Look,' said Greg, 'I'm thinking of standing for council next year. Will you support me?' 'Of course,' said the Brigadier.

'He didn't talk like a dying man at all,' Greg explained to Dr. Prinsett. 'It was a dying gasp,' said Dr. Prinsett, 'It's a common occurrence.' 'He'd make a marvellous ward organiser though,' said Greg, 'he'd give us some standing in the village. And frankly we need that. I don't think anybody's too happy about Adams being Treasurer.' 'He won't last a month,' said Dr. Prinsett; but he was wrong. The Brigadier lost half his stomach and a slice of his neck; but just when the cancer seemed to have gained control over his whole body, the process went into reverse. His skin healed, colour returned to his cheek; and soon the Brigadier was organising Greg's campaign like a military operation. 'It's miraculous,' Dr. Prinsett told Greg, 'You must have given him the will to live. It's vital in these cases. When I mention the word cancer to most of my patients, they just fall down and die. But that old boy, he's as tough as a boot. If you don't let him down he'll live for ever.'

Pam was pleased when Greg won the election at his first attempt. 'That's nice for you,' she said, 'It'll get you out of the house.' 'It'll mean,' said Greg, 'a lot more responsibility'. 'It'll be good for you,' she said, 'now you've mucked up your thesis.' Greg slammed the door and went to see the Brigadier, because he had something on his mind. He wanted to explain to the old boy that he wasn't in a very good position to change the world. It was not that he wanted to let the Brigadier down, but that he was almost a lone voice on the council, and even the County Council did

not have unlimited powers, and that it would be as much as he could do to leave any mark upon the structure of society, let alone pursue that visionary scheme for the future which the Brigadier had outlined to him on his sickbed. He didn't want the Brigadier to lose faith in him, and lie down and die, as Dr. Prinsett had suggested; because if he did, the chances were that Greg would lose confidence in himself.

They met at the Brigadier's garden gate, as the old boy was starting on his morning constitutional, across the meadow, down the hill, through the woods and into the village. The Brigadier did not want to talk politics. It was a beautiful day: the river glistened below, and the Brigadier pointed out the badger setts and the tunnels through the grass where the badgers had slid down the hill on their stomachs. 'Last summer,' said the Brigadier, 'I counted one hundred and twenty different species of wild flowers in this field alone. It kept me alive.' 'He's an ecological freak,' thought Greg, 'I might have known.' 'My speciality, of course, is butterflies,' went on the Brigadier. 'Ah,' thought Greg, 'another last cause.' It was not until they reached the village that either of them mentioned politics. Then the Brigadier just said, 'How are things on the council?' 'All right,' said Greg, 'I suppose.' 'Keep up the good work then,' said the Brigadier—and they separately did their shopping.

Greg's great political chance came in 1968, a hot summer for Chicago, Paris and Bucklestone. There were major roadworks some ten miles away where the powers-that-be were driving a motorway through to the West Country. Red-faced tourists, sweating in traffic jams, were taking the first opportunity to nip down the side-roads in the general direction of where they were going; and for two chaotic months, cars and lorries would thunder through Bucklestone, screeching their brakes as they came down the hill, grinding their gears as they climbed up it. The market square was a parking lot. There was nude bathing in the river and thirsty coach-loads would jostle out the regulars in the pub.

Greg rose to the occasion. He made long speeches about the destruction of rural England, widely reported, and his opponents, sensing a genuine issue, were pricked to the cause. The county plans were hauled out, and quickly re-drawn, with a relief road for Brimstone, Bucklestone and all the vulnerable villages.

It was a personal triumph; but it nearly wasn't, because on the day before the council debate, Greg had a surprise visit from the Brigadier. He hadn't seem him for weeks. 'What's all this nonsense,' the Brigadier said, 'about a ring road?' 'Look,' said Greg, 'I can understand exactly how you feel, but the village is being ruined. I've got to consider everyone else.' 'A little traffic won't do them any harm,' said the Brigadier. 'It'll wake their ideas up.' 'It's progress,' said Greg. 'You were always on the side of progress.' 'It's not progress,' said the Brigadier. 'You're just cutting the village off again. Haven't you noticed what's been happening? They've got a deep-freeze in the grocers and they're selling transistors in the post office.' 'If you think,' said Greg stuffily, 'that a transistor is a sign of progress. . . !' 'Of course it is,' said the Brigadier. 'It's a start. They've

got to adjust to the outside world. They've got to accept change and make something exciting out of it.' 'I think,' said Greg, 'that you're being too paternalistic. These people don't want to adjust.' 'Who's paternalistic now?' said the Brigadier.

'Look at it this way,' the Brigadier went on. 'In a year's time that motorway will be finished and then there'll be less traffic in Bucklestone than there was before. You're just wasting public money.' 'I'm the best judge of that,' said Greg. 'God Almighty! If you just gave them the money you're going to spend on the ring road, and told them to go away on holiday for a few months, you'd get a better deal.' The Brigadier was purple with anger. 'That's an absurd idea,' said Greg, 'and technically impractical.'

It was time for Greg to attack. 'I know just how you feel and if I were going to have a major road right outside my garden gate, I'd probably feel the same. And I know how you feel about your badgers and your wild flowers and your fritillaries! Your morning walk will be ruined. I know. But we've got to put our personal feelings aside. What we're facing is nothing less than an assault on the community life of the village.' 'Community life!' barked the Brigadier. 'What the hell do you know about community life!' 'It's part of our heritage,' said Greg firmly. 'It's up to us to preserve it.' The Brigadier breathed deeply. 'I hope,' he said, after a long pause, 'you know what you're doing.' 'Ah,' said Greg wisely, 'do we ever know that?'

Pam saw the Brigadier walking sightless through the village. She waved to him and momentarily let go of her son's hand, who stepped off the kerb and was narrowly missed by a passing car. She snatched him back and almost ran to the cottage in a flood of tears. Greg was standing by the window, wondering whether he'd won the argument. 'You must do something about the traffic,' she sobbed. Greg, who had been having second thoughts, made his mind up. 'I will,' he said, 'I am,' and put his arm round her. 'He's a bloody Tory,' he said, 'I always knew he was.' Pam had calmed down. 'Who?' 'The Brigadier.' 'I saw him in the village,' said Pam, 'he looked on the brink of death'. 'He'll live,' said Greg, 'remember last time.'

But this time was different. Dr. Prinsett was full of theories. 'He could have died at any time, of course, but I reckon that it was the change in his routine. As soon as the bulldozers entered the field, he never left the house. He didn't want to live.' 'He was a funny old bird,' said Adams, 'I could never understand why he wanted to join a radical party in the first place.' 'I've been thinking about that,' said Greg, 'I reckon that he was just trying to expiate his great-aunt's curse.' They all laughed. 'Well,' said Pam, 'we're all safe now.' 'We're as safe here as anywhere,' said Greg, looking out at the changeless village. 'Thanks to Jessie,' said Pam, 'and you.' 'I'm glad you said that,' said Greg, opening a bottle to toast the Brigadier's memory, 'even a witch needs a bit of male help.'

# LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

## QUARTERLY FICTION REVIEW

### by Rosalind Wade

*Master Mariner: The Darken Ship.* Nicholas Monsarrat. Cassell. £4.95. *The Past.* Neil Jordan. Cape. £6.50. *The Cosway Miniature.* Robert Rubens. Bachman and Turner. £4.65. *Headlong.* Emlyn Williams. Heinemann. £6.95. *A Short Time to Live.* Mervyn Jones. Deutsch. £6.50. *Daymare.* Thomas Hinde. Macmillan. £6.95.

For many readers Nicholas Monsarrat's *The Cruel Sea* is the outstanding example of World War II fiction. It is at the same time an extremely capable handling of its subject—the combined effect of War and the Ocean on a very dissimilar group of people. And so it was perhaps a disappointment that he resisted the temptation to write a sequel. Instead, after several successful books on quite different themes, he returned to the Sea with an elaborate account of much that had been achieved in concrete terms by intrepid sea-faring men over several centuries. *Running Proud,* the first volume of what was intended to be a trilogy under the general title of *Master Mariner,* set the scene; but sadly Monsarrat became mortally ill while working on the second part, *The Darken Ship,* and died before it was completed. Now this fragment, as it needs to be called, has appeared with notes and explanations by his widow, Ann Monsarrat. Its value must rest upon the disclosure of how a successful author goes to work and on the indications of how Nicholas Monsarrat planned to complete the saga.

Very different from this meagre offering is *The Past,* a first novel by a young Irish writer, Neil Jordan. He has developed to the full his national ability to juggle with words and images. Some detail of the physical appearance of a character, or the most mundane non-event or situation, sets him off on a helter-skelter chase after motives and implications. The fragmentation of interest is at times bewildering, although basically his theme is straight-forward—the quest by the narrator for information about his parentage and early childhood. In 1915 his grandparents, Michael and Una, returned to Ireland from Cornwall with their baby daughter, Rene. An old friend of the family, Lili, titillates the grandson's curiosity with a spate of racy anecdotes. Some of these concern events at Booterstown, where Michael was gunned down during the 'Troubles', and Una's success as an actress. Later on, when Rene herself became adult, there was her friendship in Bray with two remarkable photographers, father and son, and which of them propagated our narrator remains uncertain. Small, sad places like Bray and Booterstown come to life in an effective low-key way. Accompanied by Lili and a now elderly priest, Father Beausong, who had known all the protagonists early on, the 'I' of the story follows the trail along the spectacular West coast. He may not be much wiser at the end of the journey, but it certainly stretches his imagination. The reader is required to give undivided attention to the unravelling of a web of flashbacks and allusions. Neil Jordan's intoxicating fluency at times obscures his real intentions. Yet it is refreshing to discover a new writer who possesses such an abundance of energy and inspiration.

With his brief second novel, Robert Rubens could hardly be more different. In *The Cosway Miniature,* descriptions of events and characters are stripped to the bare bone. Marriages take place and are effortlessly dissolved; children are born and reared with scarcely a practical detail in the scenario-like narrative which Robert Rubens handles with supreme skill and confidence. Emotion has little place in his scheme of things: nor does it need to, for he views all human involvement as from a distance and so only essentials stand out to merit his attention. The emphasis is on high—or rather black—comedy. People of a kind assumed to have long since become extinct emerge graciously from the pages—Aunt Bird, an Edwardian living in contemporary South Kensington, and the dignified custodians of stately homes. It is from these richly endowed show-places that the two chief characters, Bonnie and Simon, perfect a technique of thieving to provide themselves with an adequate income. Crime pays. The pair are not apprehended through the cumbersome processes of the law. It is a final irony that the police move in on them for a different and entirely innocent reason. Bonnie and Simon are exonerated, yet they decide to leave the country, at any rate for a time. Serious debate on the ethics of these circumstances is not invited nor, guided by Robert Rubens' cool indifference to the conventions, does the reader expect it.

It is always frustrating when a comparatively short novel turns out to be not one, but two, each requiring to be judged by different standards. This is the case with *Headlong,* a first novel by the veteran playwright and actor Emlyn Williams who, with his plays and stage performances, has dominated the London theatre for half a century. So it is all the more remarkable that he should embark at this late date on a work of fiction, particularly one which rests mainly on the willing suspension of disbelief. The period is the mid-thirties. A giant air-ship is about to take off on a maiden trip from Windsor Great Park in the presence of the entire Royal family. Disaster follows, and thoughts immediately turn to the ill-fated R101. But in this case the result is even more catastrophic. The air-ship explodes, spilling boiling liquid onto the Royal stand, thus wiping out the reigning dynasty and leaving the United Kingdom apparently without an heir. The search for one, and the eventual discovery of a legitimate descendant of the Duke of Clarence are what *Headlong* is about. It is all very ingenious and quite plausible to assume that the Duke could have contracted a secret marriage and fathered a child before his early death; and that 'Jack Green' might have grown up on a Cornish farm before running away to go on the stage. Nor is it inconceivable that the raw youth would rebel at the protocol and loss of personal liberty.

It is the account of Jack's life as an itinerant actor which poses the main problem for *Headlong.* No one is better qualified than Emlyn Williams to convey the excitement and insecurity of life in the theatre; yet these nostalgic and evocative passages are difficult to graft onto the pantomime of a 'royal' commoner installed at Buckingham Palace. True, all the ends are eventually tied up, although rather too neatly. Another heir opportunely comes to light and 'Jack Green' returns to his normal milieu. The hope lingers that soon Emlyn Williams will produce a second novel, one concentrating on the theatre of the thirties which he understands so well.

In *A Short Time to Live,* Mervyn Jones has chosen an interesting theme for his eighteenth novel—a search for the true cause of the death of a talented young journalist, Michael Kellett, on the Pacific island of Tamutuvu. The reason for him being there is a total mystery. Only through the persistence of his ex-wife, Julia, does the jumble of unlikely happenings begin to make

sense. Tamutuvu is the remote part of a divided island, reminiscent of Belize, a breeding-ground for corruption and potential violence. Michael's part in all this keeps a rather diffuse and complicated plot intact.

The narrative is tidily contained between two funerals. The first is for the body of Michael Kellett, flown home from Tamutuvu. The dejection and numbness of a small group of family and former school-friends is poignantly described. Dominating the congregation is the retired schoolmaster, Mr. Evans, who still takes it as a right to admonish and advise his sometime pupils. As is to be expected, Fate has dealt with them differently. One is a dedicated if disillusioned M.P.; then there is Titus Hardcastle, shrewd yet unscrupulous in business, heading for the inevitable crash; and Philip, a kind of benign hippy. Their activities provide a spectrum of contemporary life-styles. Titus' wife, Emma, and Philip drift into a rather unlikely love-affair. Michael's widow, Alison, resists sexual involvement in deference to the memory of a satisfactory marriage. Other problems, financial and personal, come and go, obscuring, it must be acknowledged, the broad progress of the novel. In the end, the solution surfaces. Michael was engaged in an undercover investigation of Titus' business negotiations on Tamutuvu and was effectively liquidated by assassins. Titus dies from worry and overwork, leaving the way clear for Emma's union with Philip. And so *A Short Time to Live* ends up with the second funeral. It is just such a pity that in the general stampede to get everything nicely resolved, all the exciting and sinister undertones of the first few chapters seems to have been mislaid.

And finaly, *Daymare* by Thomas Hinde, a witty, invigorating novel based on a theme of great topical interest and importance,—the breakdown of law and order. Focus is on the unexceptional hamlet of Kingsleap and the frightening, though at times farcical events which catch the villagers unawares. Characteristically, they face up to an unfamiliar situation, coping with fear and inconvenience in their very individual ways. It could all seem out of this world, yet is not, for there is an uncanny, underlying conviction that here is a true, even familiar, pattern of hazards and anarchy which at times comes near to engulfing us all. Without over-emphasis, Thomas Hinde poses an important query. Are the wreckers of our equilibrium merely morons who happen to possess the physical muscle to push everyone around? Or are they new and powerful masters ready and able to take control? Interwoven with the comedy and sharp-eyed observation, the question constantly reasserts itself and demands a definitive answer.

**Also Received:**

*Photo-finish.* Ngaio Marsh. Collins. £5.95.

Readers all over the world will be reassured by the publication of a new crime novel, *Photo-finish* by Dame Ngaio Marsh, her twenty-fourth and set in her native New Zealand. Here once again are the 'resident' characters, Chief-Superintendent Roderick Alleyn and his artist wife, Troy. An invitation to the remote island home of a millionaire impresario lands the couple in the thick of a particularly brutal and mysterious murder; the victim being a world-famous opera star, Isabella Sommita. As Alleyn is put through his well-defined paces the surrounding characters, Troy included, tend to fade into insignificance. There are red-herrings and minor deceptions, but in the end Alleyn wins through to the all-too predictable *denouement.* Dame Ngaio's frequent flashes of wit and sophistication off-set some stereo-types and dated slang. It

is mainly her splendidly vivid descriptions of New Zealand scenery which live on in the mind.

*Out of Season.* Ian Burton. Sidgwick and Jackson. £5.95.

Here is a first novel of undoubted promise and originality by a new young writer. *Out of Season,* despite its well worn theme—the life of a seaside town during the winter months—presents familiar material in the form of an intricate web of recollection and observation. Although sometimes difficult to follow, the overall effect is impressive.

*The American Heiress.* Dorothy Eden/*The Passing Bells.* Philip Rock. Both from Hodder and Stoughton. £5.95 each.

These two novels seem to complement each other, for they both follow approximately the same period and theme—that of wealthy, landed families before and during World War I. *The Passing Bells* is by a young American writer who spent much of his childhood in England, and attempts an upstairs-downstairs story backed by serious research. Even if some of the servants and their aristocratic masters come dangerously near to *cliché* characters, Philip Rock invests them with a genuine life of their own. He deals capably with birth, marriage and bereavement against a factual background, although his long-drawn and repetitive accounts of actual battles, so thoroughly handled elsewhere, serve little purpose in what is essentially a popular work of fiction.

Dorothy Eden on the other hand, has no such serious purpose in mind. She has specialised in the romantic thriller for many years and in *The American Heiress* concentration is on events following the sinking of the Lusitania in 1915. The maid, illegitimate half-sister to her employer, survives and impersonates her drowned mistress. If it can be accepted that such a deception could remain undetected, the novel is not without its gripping moments. But for much of it the affairs of the imposter and those she deceives run along rather too smoothly.

*The Happy Prince and Other Stories.* Oscar Wilde. Horizon Handmade Books. £12.75.

It is always refreshing to learn of a successful private publishing enterprise and the re-publication of Oscar Wilde's *Happy Prince and Other Stories* is valuable for several reasons. The five stories, originally appearing in 1888, are well worth reprinting. In a beautifully produced book by the husband and wife team, Carol and Peter Cholerton, interesting, new and original illustrations are by Peter Cholerton and the book is hand bound, printed in 'Monotype' Horley Old Style.

ROSALIND WADE

## THE VARIETIES OF LOVE

*Earthly Powers.* Anthony Burgess. Hutchinson, £6.95.

Must an important novel contain a significant message? Professional critics and teachers of Eng. Lit. would have us believe so. Like many members of the general public, I am slow to agree with them. Anthony Burgess's powerful and terrifying gifts are seen at their most vivid and disconcerting in Earthly Powers. He holds our attention throughout the 649 pages with a mixture of character creation, sheer sensationalism and penetrating theological argument. Murder by witchcraft of a dear friend in Malaya, the nastiest side of Mussolini's Fascism, the still more horrifying aspects of Nazism. Inevitably perhaps mass suicide in California in a revolting perversion of religion. All is worked

with unforced skill into the memories of an octogenarian homosexual, whose own sexual performances will disgust quite a few readers. It may be they would have shocked me more than they do now, if I had not read so many worse things in the study of Pornography.

But left to myself, I would not have discovered a central theme. The publishers, no doubt assisted by the author, have provided us with an official clue. 'Breathing the stench of Buchenwald, Toomey sees finally that evil comes from man himself, it is inborn; for his brother-in-law Carlo, the saintly but sybaritic priest destined to be Pope, it is a force at large in the world that must be challenged constantly in all its guises.'

Faced with an examination paper, without the above assistance, I would have described Earthly Powers as a terrific narrative concerned with the varieties of love. I cannot think that many homosexuals, let alone heterosexuals will have much respect for the narrator's sexual activities, though sympathy increases as one proceeds. At the very end, back home in Sussex, he is sharing a bedroom in a perfectly respectable way with his sister, also very elderly, the one true love of his life. But the supreme character is Carlo, the Pope, surely one of the noblest figures in modern fiction, not based exactly on Pope John, Pope John Paul I or Pope John Paul II, but drawing inspiration it would seem from all three.

Mr. Burgess, I gather from an interview he gave recently, is not at the moment an actively practising Catholic. But he is soaked in Catholic thought and feeling. The replies given by Carlo on television to a gang of hard-faced American ladies could not be improved on by the most convinced Catholic apologist. 'Okay', a housewife in beads said, 'but why did Rome ever think it had the right to set itself up as the only ah ah religious authority? I mean, you're the Pope, right?' 'Right', the Pope said, rightly. 'I mean, why should Luther be wrong and ah ah Calvin and Henry the Seventh no Eighth and ah ah Billy Graham and the Holy Rollers and William Penn and ah ah right?' To which the Pope, obviously enjoying himself replied 'The important thing today is the whole Christian fraternity. Of that I may claim to be not the head but the coordinating minister. Such a claim is reasonable, being based on a historical tradition. Rome is the symbol of Christian unity, no more. We must talk no more of Catholics and Protestants—only of Christians.'

But the theme of the book, as I understand it, is brought out more clearly in another passage. In reply to angry shouts from these hard and emancipated women, furious with him over his attitude to birth control, 'Carlo's great voice rose like a lion's above them "Love, he cried, love is greater than animal coupling. Can we not learn that love of the spirit that transcends the lust of the flesh? Love, love, let us have love".'

There are many kinds of cruelty described in this book, but also many kinds of love. Anthony Burgess leaves us to draw our own conclusions as to which kind he prefers.

FRANK LONGFORD

## NON-FICTION REVIEWS

### NYE, JENNIE LEE AND MICHAEL FOOT

*My Life with Nye.* Jennie Lee. Jonathan Cape. £8.50.
*Debts of Honour.* Michael Foot. Davis Poynter. £9.50.

Lady Lee's absorbing volume does not set out to add more than a series of foot-notes to the massive biography of her husband by Michael Foot. Philip

Williams, the equally massive biographer of Hugh Gaitskell, has already corrected her sharply on a major question of fact, and has suggested that her political account is not to be taken seriously. That is as it may be. But this book will always be admired as a beautiful love story. We must indeed be grateful to her for forcing herself to write it, when it was clearly so painful to reveal her private life with her beloved husband.

I do not come to the memory of Aneurin Bevan without prejudice. I had no personal disputes with him, but as one whom Hugh Gaitskell used to refer to as his oldest friend, I saw Nye Bevan, admittedly at second hand, at his worst. Lady Lee makes a desperate effort at one point to pay tribute to Hugh Gaitskell's sincerity. But on the whole she is consistently unfavourable to him. In his dealings with Hugh, Nye could do no wrong, whereas for me and many other Gaitskellites, it was the other way round.

She herself raises the pertinent question: 'What was it all about? What were we striving for all those years?' The answer is not to be found here, nor in anything Michael Foot has written, though all of that has been deeply felt and much of it expressed brilliantly.

The most surprising statement in the book is that Nye was killed by a stomach ulcer brought on by tension and repression, this being itself the result of hysterical attacks on him, not by Tories or even Gaitskellites, but by 'anti-bomb warriors' . In their eyes he ratted on nuclear disarmament. Yet Michael Foot, the supreme champion of the nuclear cause was reconciled to him before he died and constructed the noble memorial already referred to. All this has particular relevance at the moment when Michael Foot, still pledged to nuclear disarmament, has been elected Leader of the Labour Party.

How far will the faithful unto death disciple follow in the steps of the master?

Michael Foot himself presents us with fourteen essays of varying length and importance. Some are quite short; those on Disraeli and Beaverbrook take up seventy-six pages between them. All are eloquent and admiring. The book is not called 'Debts of Honour' without reason. Michael Foot has been blessed with an unusual degree of human affection. The question of his principles is fraught with difficulty. In his public life he has persistently distinguished himself as a consistent radical. And some of the essays here, those about Bertrand Russell and Brailsford, for example, describe a character whose political aspirations were close to his own. But he exerts himself with equal facility to sing the praises of the aforementioned Disraeli and Beaverbrook, the one the most admired Tory prime minister, the other a real Beelzebub in progressive and many other eyes.

It is not merely that he approaches historical characters with objectivity, or the sympathy owed to all human beings, he positively glorifies these gentlemen. He describes with gusto, for example, the great dinner to celebrate Beaverbrook's birthday, when he recited Milton's famous lines about Beelzebub to universal admiration. His friendship with Beaverbrook which had been under strain 'was renewed and never collapsed thereafter'.

Foot explains with utmost candour that he was much indebted to Beaverbrook for employment and in other ways. It says much for his own integrity that he has survived the inevitable taunts of moral inconsistency.

Much the best essay in the book is that about his beloved father, Isaac, who would greet him on his return home from life with Beaverbrook with enquiries about life in the house of Rimmon. ' "Hope", he would whisper, and the little Cornish chapel would be utterly still... Outside, the world seemed sharply

brighter than when we went in, and we would return to our Sunday dinner, the best of the week, bubbling with an unaccountable optimism, touched no doubt by the beauty of the words, the Bible's, Wordsworth's or his own.'

Today we understand that Michael Foot is officially a Humanist, that is to say a non-Christian. But there can be no one in public life who has had a stronger Christian formation. Of all the debts of honour discharged in this book, that to his father was surely the one most worth repaying and the one most fully repaid.

FRANK LONGFORD

## THE CHURCHILL INDUSTRY

*Winston S. Churchill.* Companion Volume V. Part 1. The Exchequer Years 1922-1929. Martin Gilbert. £45. (After February 1981 £55.)

I recently took a friend to visit Chartwell, the house and grounds that Winston Churchill discovered, bought and completely re-designed during much of the period covered by this volume of letters. It is difficult to realise that Churchill had already held five Cabinet posts before and during the Great War. He was out of Office in 1922, and after losing two by-elections re-entered the House of Commons in 1924 as the Member for Epping, was made Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Baldwin Government 1924-29 and moved into Chartwell.

This volume contains 1,500 pages of memoranda, Cabinet Minutes, telegrams and letters from and to the great man. Some of these are to his wife and family and many about Chartwell; the others are to and from a host of celebrities including the Chamberlains, Birkenhead, Lloyd George, Beaverbrook, Balfour, Amery and, above all, Baldwin and King George V. Martin Gilbert deserves a gold medal for this and the other scholarly, imaginative and formidable recordings. Each reader will find his own gems in unsuspected quarters because the whole volume is a mine of information—and humour. One must remember that during these five years our hero was Chancellor of the Exchequer, that a General Strike took place and many great Acts of Parliament were passed; also that he began and finished writing *The World Crisis.*

Here are a few samples about Chartwell. On April 24 to his wife Clemmie: 'all yesterday and to-day we have been turfing and levelling the plateau . . . the white washers, the oak stainers, the carpenters and the plasterers are hard at work from morn till night . . . work on the dam is progressing, meanwhile the old lake is practically dry. There is an average of a foot of mud and I am going at it hard with my railway to clear it out.' In a letter to Baldwin September 1928, dealing mostly with changes in the Cabinet he adds: 'I have had a delightful month, building a cottage and dictating a book; 200 bricks and 2,000 words a day.' The architect, Philip Tilden, writing thirty years later, said: 'No client, that I have had, has spent more time, trouble, or interest in the making of a home.'

Was this same client a great Chancellor of the Exchequer? He was certainly an uncomfortable ex-Liberal in a Conservative government. Amery and Beaverbrook were bitterly opposed to his Free Trade policy. Indeed, Martin Gilbert quotes from Amery's diary December 12, 1928: 'possibly the best thing would be that we should be beaten (in the election). I confess I cannot at this moment see any other way of getting that "old man of the sea" Winston off my shoulder.' Halifax (then Lord Irwin) and Neville Chamberlain found him a difficult colleague.

But no summary digest can be made of this gigantic and magnificent volume. There are endless letters and memoranda on financial and local government

policy, on rating reform, on cruisers and naval parity, on meetings with the Miners' Federation, etc., etc. The last pages reveal letters from all his colleagues and his critics thanking him for signed copies of *The World Crisis: The Aftermath* as personal gifts. One can only exclaim, What a man!

Martin Gilbert will add two further Companion volumes covering the years 1929-1939 and will complete the official Life of Churchill in two final books. This is the Churchill Industry on its way to completion by the most brilliant and meticulous historian of our time.

KENNETH LINDSAY

## A NEW STUDY OF RICHARD NIXON

*Nixon, a Study in Extremes of Fortune.* Lord Longford. Weidenfeld & Nicolson. £8.95.

Lord Longford is generous, warm-hearted and well-intentioned, and he brings these qualities to his study of Richard Nixon. Liberal critics (and they form the majority) have—for the most part—had a lot of fun at both author's and subject's expense. In fact his long essay—the book runs to less than 200 pages—is remarkably balanced and fully aware of Nixon's deficiencies of character, of the contrast between 'the light and the dark' side in him. It is a biographical sketch, with much psychological guess-work. Almost half of it is devoted to Watergate; and if anyone still requires a brief account of that unhappy story it is told here clearly and objectively. Plainly Nixon knew nothing of the burglary until it occurred. Plainly some of his staff were very strange characters to be employed in or near the White House. Plainly Attorney-General Mitchell should have given them short shrift. Plainly the mood of *sauve qui peut* quickly became endemic. Plainly the President sought to cover things up if he could—as many of his predecessors had done before him, if not for such serious illegalities as burglary, spying and 'dirty tricks'. In this telling, John Dean emerges as an unpleasant (and vastly over-rated) grey eminence; and Lord Longford sees the role of Archibald Cox, and of his army of Democratic aides, as crucial.

What is welcome is his emphasis on the hostility of the Press to Nixon ever since his anti-Communist campaigns in the later 1940s; in the end he felt himself in his Oval Office to be a man under siege; liberty of the Press can easily become license to savage. Nixon in fact paid the price—compounded by his own deviousness—of the 30-year dominance of the radical chic in the media, in a Washington that lives by gossip and innuendo, and in the East Coast establishment. Lord Longford is at least free from some illusions, and he brings a rare *caritas* to his portrait.

He is stronger on personalities than on history and politics. Either he or his proof readers err at times. Duke University is a long way away from Northern California (p. 4); there could never be a 67-62 vote in the Senate (p. 24) which has one hundred members; there is some 30 year slippage in the reference to Truman's pardoning of *his* over-zealous aids and abettors (p. 123). But it makes a change to read a study of Nixon, however cursory a survey and however scarred by a taste for name-dropping, that at least seeks to understand. Tout comprendre, c'est tout pardonner? Had it not been for Watergate—a burglary as unnecessary as it was illegal—Nixon's foreign policy achievements would have put him among the greatest of the Presidents. And at least he had a flair for leadership that has been sadly missing since his resignation.

ESMOND WRIGHT

## THACKERAY: A SHORT AND ANXIOUS LIFE

*An Uneasy Victorian: Thackeray the Man.* Ann Monsarrat. Cassell. £9.95.

Mrs. Monsarrat's Thackeray canters along at a fair old pace, beribboned, like a hobby-horse to market. Although, to be sure, she says in her early pages that 'In the very peak of Thackeray's achievement there were strands of melancholy and sadness,' she does not develop this theme, although the scenes and acts of Thackeray's short and anxious life (1811-1863) were, in reality, sombre in the extreme. He never forgot the pain of the parting from his mother when, an only child aged five, he was despatched home to England, leaving his widowed mother in India, there to remarry. Nor did he forget the starvation and the canings at a boarding school in Southampton. He waited three and a half years to see his mother again. Charterhouse was Charterhouse. He wasted Cambridge in a sea of gambling, and it is still incomprehensible why such a vice should have fastened so savagely upon so humane a host. His inheritance failed. It was a long time before he could decide a career: journalism warred with first law, then art, and the indecision worried him more than it exhilarated.

It was typical Thackeray luck that his youthful erotic experiences left him impeded for life with stricture of the urethra. When he fell in love and married, it was bound to be disastrous. His mother-in-law was a poisonous creeper, and his bride developed a thorough-going insanity, florid and suicidal at first and then slipping into a long attrition. How Thackeray tried to cure her! He remained morally tied to her, and to their two daughters, and when he entered into a passionate attachment to his best friend's wife, Jane Brookfield, he suffered more than that interesting lady. He floundered about in the Brookfields' connubial nest as unfortunately as that other great invading cuckoo, J. M. Barrie. Dickens-like, he provided for all and sundry, writing and lecturing exhaustively for the benefit of those dependants, always driven by anxiety and pressures. He died at 52, gaunt, wasted, and exhausted.

Mrs. Monsarrat makes light of it all. Her narrative proceeds at a pitch that is uniformly mildly feverish, and lacks chiaroscuro. She is determined to entertain, and the whole is winsomely garnished by Thackeray's own sketches, which contribute to the effect of carnival. It is unfair to Mrs. Monsarrat that readers interested in Thackeray, who were not unable to resist Margaret Forster's invented 'memoirs' of Thackeray, will experience a sense of *déjà vu,* which fully justifies one's misgivings about that latter *tour de force,* for Mrs. Monsarrat is wonderfully thorough and reliable in her presentation of the biographical facts.

She does not, unfortunately, develop other than cursorily in the context of his situation as a quasi bachelor, the promising theme of her title—Thackeray's 'uneasiness' as a Victorian. When Dr. Daiches writes,

> There were elements in him of both Swift and Fielding, yet he was not allowed the freedom of either of those writers; so indignation became whittled down to moral disapproval and a deep sense of the great moral inconsistencies of life was weakened and softened to sentimentality. Matthew Arnold said of the poet Gray that 'he never spoke out'; the phrase might more aptly be applied to Thackeray,

he refers to the totality of Thackeray's predicament. What if, he argues, Thackeray wants to reveal the whole truth about man in society, *and* he wants to be edifying, but that discovered truth is *not* edifying? That is the kind of

uneasiness that may have averted Thackeray from a formal autobiography or the idea of a biography—not some kind of *pudeur,* but a realisation of the unfairness of his life and an inability to reconcile it to Victorian morality.

MOLLY TIBBS

## PUPIL OF ANNIGONI

*Of Savages and Kings.* Sara Leighton. Bachman & Turner. £7.95.

A man may not be a hero to his valet but a painter may to his pupil. After a chance meeting in London Miss Leighton, a young portrait painter, was invited by Pietro Annigoni, painter of the Queen's celebrated portrait, to show him a folio of her work. 'Undoubtedly', he said, 'you will make a lot of money, people will tell you you are very clever, and you will continue to paint many portraits, and because of your success you will never bother to improve, unless . . . you have the courage to . . . come to Florence and study with me.' So that is what she did for two years, lodging in a small hotel on the Ponte Vecchio.

He was, she says, a strict disciplinarian, temperamental and 'as disturbing as thunder on a perfect day.' Although attracted to women he distrusted them; evidently he did not like them very much. Expert at putting people in their place, he was sometimes cruel yet had 'flashes of kindness and understanding so perceptive in their sensibility that at times I wondered if he was clairvoyant.'

The peace of the studio was often shattered by an opera singer practising below and the snapping of mousetraps. When she said she didn't approve of mouse-trapping he protested 'But they eat all my drawings.' Painting a portrait of her standing in a black cloak, he remarked: 'Sometimes you must paint like a lunatic—and sometimes like an accountant.' Later she saw that the figure had been surrounded by flying witches and devils on horseback. 'I want your figure,' he explained, 'to be the only thing of softness and beauty in a harsh modern world of evil and cruelty.' He met disaster calmly when a bottle of ink fell on a portrait of Prince Philip perfected by intricate processes. Once, he recalled, when he was very poor and sold a picture he flung the coins all over the room, into nooks and crannies where he could find them whenever he needed a meal. 'He gave me heart to fight for a career' she states, and duly emulated him by painting a fresco portrait of the Queen Mother for the Foundation for the Disabled.

Twice married, with two children, Sara was often off at tangents, imbued with something of the zest that drove Lady Hester Stanhope and Gertrude Bell to the desert Arabs, Mary Kingsley to the West African jungles. She went on safari solo through the South African bush, studying native life, and descended the Roode Pont Deep goldmine. In Zanzibar she met the deposed Crown Prince, a patient in a mental institution, and contacted native witchcraft. On Bora Bora isle, a South Pacific 'paradise', she lived alone in a flimsy grass hut and had to repel amorous invaders. Staying 2½ years with a married sister in Bahrain, she probed the exotic social life there and the wiles of the oil sheikhs with western women. She writes as she has lived: frankly, vividly, alertly. Despite occasional ingenuous lapses in style, she emerges as a venturer in life typical of her time yet often transcending it.

TREVOR ALLEN

# SHORTER REVIEWS

**Late Antique, Early Christian and Medieval Art.** (Chatto and Windus. £20). This is the third of four projected volumes of collected papers by Meyer Schapiro to appear. The other two were *Romanesque Art* 1977, and *Modern Art* 1978. My assessment of the latest volume is valid for all three. If one were highly specialised in the periods considered and the artefacts Mr. Schapiro deals with, it might just be possible to fault him in some abstruse way. But the author's erudite and probing sleuthing is as stimulating as any Sherlock Holmes story. The wide range of knowledge and association is rendered fascinating by the manner in which he correlates his material. At moments the reader might believe that he has found a weakness in the development of an argument, only to find that the author has himself foreseen the critique and proceeds to deal with it. Free of aesthetic claptrap these books are immanent with Mr. Schapiro's joy in, and fascination with, his subject. The enquiring layman will find these books rewarding in both technique and content and might well find himself won over to the History of Art!

CYRIL FRADAN

**Nudes 1945-1980.** Bill Brandt. (Gordon Fraser. £17.50). Evocative and moody, but never suggestive, these images of nudes by Bill Brandt are as chaste and cold as the geological forms they are so often made to resemble. Their faces are as still and emotion-free as a classical Athena. Brandt is a photographer who succumbed to the influence of the Surrealists in Paris from 1929 onwards. He contrives his photographs in ways which clearly recall the works of Magritte—notably No. 69, where, by combing the model's hair forward over her face, he gives the disturbing impression that her head has been turned 180°. Reflecting mirrors play with space and the concept of images in images in much the same way as Magritte. Exaggerated foreshortening distorts to figures in a manner reminiscent of Picasso's women on the beach in the early 20's—themselves based on camera distortions! Diffused light and definition of detail from foreground to background emphasise the very careful planal composition. Threatening clouds and brooding shadows create mystery and some menace. Sometimes he slips into melodrama, using head-hoods and chains but, these few photographs excepted, this is a major collection of emotionally-charged and mysterious images, superbly surrealist in that they are actually made of real objects.

CYRIL FRADAN

**The Rise and Fall of Empires** (Cassel). The seventh volume in this attractive illustrated series of coffee table size is *Storm over Asia,* (£7.95). The first part, on *Genghis Khan and the Mongols,* contains a useful short account by Henry Wiencek of the meteoric rise of the Mongol empire in the thirteenth century and its subsequent decline. In the second part, Glenn D. Lowry with Amanda Heller write with brevity on *The Mogul Expansion* from the sixteenth century until the Indian Mutiny. Professor W. M. Thackston, Jr., Associate Professor of Persian at Harvard, has contributed a short Preface to the volume. Volume eight in the series covers a more familiar field. *One Family, Two Empires,* (£7.95) is concerned with the Hapsburg

dynasties. Joyce Milton writes on the *Spanish Hapsburgs,* and Caroline Davidson on *The Hapsburgs in Central Europe,* ending in effect with the Emperor Francis Joseph. The texts are remarkable efforts in compression. The short Preface is contributed by Professor Barbara Jelavich, Professor of History at Indiana University. Textual brevity in both volumes is inevitable, since they are really dominated by the illustrations. They are superb reproductions in colour. Their source is rarely given, except in the case of some paintings by, for example, Velasquez, Murillo and Rubens. Indeed the illustrations, with their captions can be enjoyed without reference to the text, although the latter is necessary to the volumes. There are no bibliographies.

**Richard Doyle's Journal** (Bartholomew, with British Museum Publications. £6.95). Christopher Wheeler has introduced and annotated this remarkable illustrated journal by a precocious lad in 1840. Richard Doyle was then only fifteen, and within three years started his very distinguished career as an illustrator with the recently-founded *Punch.* The journal is all about his daily life in London, both at home and more particularly when moving around the metropolis, noting street life, processions and art exhibitions which pleased him particularly. The illustrations are extraordinarily mature, with technical skill and impact. Richard Doyle kept the journal to himself all his life. He died in 1883 and two years later a facsimile edition was published. The original in the British Museum has faded and this new edition is a reproduction of the 1883 facsimile. As such it is good; the spirit of the original *Journal* is in these pages, but not, alas, the full quality.

**Eric Partridge in his own Words.** (Andre Deutsch. £6.50). This is a delightful volume dedicated to the memory of a great scholar of the English language and lexicographer. He is remembered particularly for his *A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English, A Dictionary of the Underworld* and *Origins: A Short Etymological Dictionary of Modern English.* Although Eric Partridge had a very large literary output, it is right in this collection of his essays for the Editor, David Crystal, to 'give this volume some coherence, by restricting it to Eric Partridge's study of language'. In the result there are 26 articles, in Parts devoted to Word-Books, Word-Levels, Words and Dictionaries. There is his own *'Genesis of a Lexicographer, from Sanskrit to Brazil.'* There are tributes to his memory by Ralph Elliott, Randolph Quirk, Anthony Burgess and Winston Graham. Everyone interested in the background and usage of the English language over a wide field must be attracted to this volume and find in it a great deal to enjoy and most likely to learn more about it.

**A Portrait of Jane Austen** (Penguin Books. £3.95). Penguins have produced a paperback edition of David Cecil's masterpiece which was first published by Constable in 1978. He describes the study as 'an attempt with the aid of material drawn from her letters, her novels and other people's memories of her, to reconstruct and depict her living personality and to explore its relation to her art'. This is all particularly set 'in the context of the period and society in which she lived.' It is an attempt which is universally regarded as brilliantly successful. It is also delightfully written and is the ideal companion to enjoyment of the novels. The illustrations, in colour and monochrome, are excellent.

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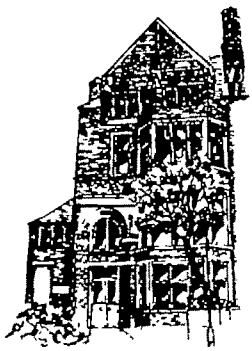

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116th YEAR OF PUBLICATION

## FEBRUARY 1981

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Norman Reddaway

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## THE POLISH CRISIS

### by Norman Reddaway

POLAND, for several decades, has aroused little interest in the media of the Western world. She has been regarded as an integral part of the Soviet Bloc. Her external and defence policies have been so closely aligned with Moscow's as to prompt no more than marginal curiosity in other countries.

Suddenly all has changed. In 1980 Poland was in the headlines all over the world. Polish workers, until recently regarded as almost automatic supporters of a regime ostensibly run in the interests of the workers, have suddenly declared themselves dissatisfied with that regime. Furthermore, they have declared that they are not prepared to go on working for it unless the regime changes radically. Indeed, the workers have downed tools and refused to resume work without firm assurances that the rules under which Poland has been run since the War are changed.

At first it looked as though the 1980 outburst of discontent would follow familiar lines and peter out, as happened in 1956 in Poznan. The riots there were quickly quelled and concessions were made by the regime. A new communist leader, Gomulka, took over. Collectivisation of agriculture was quietly stopped. The regime became less harsh. Gomulka in turn was dropped after riots in Gdansk in 1970, and replaced by Gierek. Austerity was modified and for five years Poland combined industrial expansion on Western credit with a year-by-year rise in real wages. It was too good to last. Credit and subsidies distorted the economy. In 1976 workers aligned themselves with other groups in protesting against a proposal to reduce subsidies by raising meat prices. The regime quickly backtracked, and Poland settled down again. But the boom had slackened and rising expectations could no longer be met. Haunted by oil price rises, Western recession, bad harvests and the inbuilt arthritis of a dictatorially planned economy, Gierek appealed to Poland's grousing millions to be patient and patriotic, and to tighten belts until the investments of the early seventies paid off in the early eighties.

But in 1980 Polish patience ran out, and Polish patriotism manifested itself in workers' determination to achieve a better life in Poland by adopting measures unthinkable in the post-war period hitherto. Thus crisis came unexpectedly to Poland in 1980. Suddenly the assumptions of decades were challenged and found inadequate. The price of meat again sparked off the discontent, but in 1980 the crisis was not to be quickly

resolved as in the past. It settled in. It is still there. It is now recognised as a crisis of confidence in the assumptions underlying the government and lifestyle that have prevailed in Poland since the War. The mood in Warsaw is a mixture of elation and apprehension. An era has ended, and all is uncertainty.

The main reason for this sudden change is that Poland has been Catholic and westward-looking for a thousand years, and communist, anchored within the Soviet Bloc, for only thirty-five. Under the stresses and disappointments of the international recession large numbers of Poles are no longer content with their lot, and are protesting that changes are required. The emergence of a Polish Pope, after a thousand years of Christianity in Poland, has proved disturbing to the New Order in the long term, if not decisive in the short term. Poland's present crisis is inseparably linked with Poland's past.

Poland's history has been more painful than that of almost any other European country. A relatively small nation has found itself sandwiched between far more numerous Germans in the West and overwhelming numbers of Russians in the East. Polish territory on the north European plain has no natural eastern and western frontiers. Only to the south are there mountains, and in the north the Baltic. Until 1945 German territory separated Poland from the Baltic Sea, apart from a narrow corridor created after the first World War.

Between the Wars Poland was a complicated, heterogeneous nation, with large numbers of Lithuanians, White Russians, Ukrainians, Germans and Jews living uneasily, together with the main body of Poles, within the straggling Versailles frontiers. By European standards Poland was poor, and weighed down by a too numerous peasantry.

Earlier, in the 14th, 15th and 16th centuries Poland was a great European power. Covetous eyes were cast upon her territory in the 17th century, during which the invading Swedes did untold damage. Without a hereditary dynasty the system of electing Polish kings became increasingly abused by acquisitive European powers. The Ambassadors of France, Austria, Prussia and Russia spent great sums of gold in Warsaw in order to promote the prospects of their favoured candidates. Polish patriotism was never in doubt, but Poles could seldom agree on major matters of policy.

At the end of the 17th century a Saxon king was elected, dividing his loyalties between Dresden and Warsaw. This king, Augustus the Strong, was reputed to have, before his election to the Polish throne, three hundred and sixty identifiable children, and he did not prove an effective ruler of Poland during the first third of the 18th century. Nor did his successor, Augustus the Second, who spanned the middle third of the century; nor Stanislas Augustus Poniatowski, the discarded lover of Russia's Catherine the Great. He spanned the last third of the 18th century until 1794, when the third and final partition of Poland, between Prussia, Russia and Austria effectively removed Poland from the map of Europe for the next century and a quarter.

Napoleon, anxious to use Polish soldiers for his own ends, resurrected a part of Poland and made of it a French puppet, but the Congress of Vienna erased Napoleon's creation and re-established a Polish king. Unfortunately for Polish nationalists, the new king of Poland was also the Czar of Russia.

Until an independent Poland re-emerged from the crucible of the first World War, the Polishness of the three parts of partitioned Poland was upheld to a large extent by the Polish Catholic Church, which earned for itself the reputation, which it has never lost, of being a Polish patriotic church. Throughout the terrible history of Poland the Roman Catholic Church has never wavered, nor lost the people's confidence.

Between the wars Poland was a vigorous if poor country. Marshal Pilsudski routed the Red Army in 1920 and drove it out of Poland northwards and eastwards. Prospects seemed good until Hitler's shadow lengthened. Poland was invaded in September 1939 and within a month had undergone the fourth partition, presided over by Hitler and Stalin, and had again ceased to exist. The Polish struggle against the Nazis was carried on mainly from France and then from Britain.

The overwhelming mass of patriotic Poles hoped for the restoration of the Polish republic after liberation by the Western powers. It was not to be.

Stalin was determined to impose on Poland a communist government of Russian choosing, and to incorporate Poland into the defensive bastion between Russia and the West which he deemed essential to Russia's security. Stalin's plan was carried out, leaving Poland a smaller, but better endowed and more compact and homogeneous country than before. Six million Poles had perished, half of them Jews. The thirty million or so survivors, resentful of having a communist government imposed on them, and of being locked into the Soviet Bloc, nevertheless settled down to rebuilding the country and upholding the Polishness of Poland. Reconstruction demanded all their energies. Until recently it seemed likely that there would be no major disturbance of this unsatisfactory but manageable setup in the foreseeable future.

Poland has indeed become a significant power in the post-war world. A relatively soft policy towards the Poles on the part of the Kremlin, together with fear of Germany and of another partition, have kept Poland quiescent, though many voices within Poland have been asking for more independence within the Soviet Bloc.

Polish society has been gripped by the Polish communist party, which dominates the media, the security forces and the political machine. This situation has long been resented, but until recently there has been no major move towards revolt at home, let alone any serious movement towards leaving the Soviet Bloc. Despite Soviet and communist party preeminence, Poland has remained a strangely uncommunist communist country, with 80% of the people practising Catholics, three quarters of the land in private hands and the tendency to look westwards culturally

and commercially largely unaffected by Soviet domination.

Until his departure in 1980, Mr. Gierek had shown himself adept at dissuading the Russians from treating Poland too harshly (the standard of living is considerably higher in Poland than in the Soviet Union) and by using western credits he managed in the early 70's to increase year by year the real wages of the workers. Cars and flats became available to more and more Poles. *Embourgeoisement* progressed.

Gierek had to tread a narrow path between those demanding even more liberalism, and those warning against the perils of deviating further from communist austerity. He kept reminding the Poles that bad harvests, oil price increases and a recent recession in the west were factors beyond his control, but that Poland was amongst the first fifteen of industrial nations and was well-endowed.

Until 1980 the Gierek formula on the whole justified itself. Industrialization continued, poverty had been eliminated even if affluence had not succeeded it, and prospects for the future did not seem unduly dim. It looked as though tight alignment with the USSR and tight discipline imposed by the communist party would continue to be acceptable.

Gierek demonstrated to the people that he respected the Catholic Church. He went to Rome in 1977 to visit the Pope, and stressed his regard for the Polish clergy and their contribution to upholding morality and social values in Poland. He openly welcomed the elevation in 1978 of Cardinal Wojtyla. Gierek and the Polish ecclesiastical hierarchy developed a grudging respect for each other as interdependent patriotic upholders of the Fatherland. They were aptly dubbed 'Two oxen in a single Polish plough.' Not caring overmuch for each other, they nonetheless plodded forward together, pulling in the interests of Poland.

But in 1980 the formula of the seventies ceased to work. The difficulty of obtaining meat and other items considered essential sparked off resistance of an unprecedented strength and sophistication. Led by Lech Walesa and his colleagues, the protagonists of passive resistance asserted themselves. Many workers ceased to work, declaring that they would only resume if they were allowed to organize independent trade unions, if the church was allowed access to the media and wages were improved.

The 1980 crisis differed from previous crises. In 1980 there was a deliberate slow-down by the workers culminating in a major stoppage of work —deliberate and well-disciplined—nearer to Gandhi's passive resistance tactics than to the usual Polish taking to the streets. In 1980 also, the Poles showed determination not to fall into the trap of Budapest in 1956 or Prague in 1968. Then Russian tanks moved in quickly to quell an open revolt. In 1980 disciplined men sat in at their places of work and stressed that they neither wished to overturn the system in Poland, nor to challenge the solidarity of the Soviet Bloc.

In 1980 there has so far been no Revolutionary Moment at which the governed proved unwilling to go on being governed in the same old way, and the governors proved incapable of going on governing in the same old

way. It has not yet come to the test. The government sent leaders to reason with the strikers and persuade them to return to work. The results of the negotiations were patchy. Some concessions were won (broadcasting of Mass, more Church building, better wages), but permission to form free trade unions, though conceded, was clearly not capable of quick implementation without endless difficulties, since under communism trade unions are a transmission belt for government policy, leaving no place for free trade unions acting as instruments of pressure on the government.

Strikers and government alike have avoided the ultimate showdown, settling instead for contradictory concessions virtually impossible to implement. The Russians, knowing full well the strategic importance of Poland on the lines of communication between the Soviet Union where the weapons are made, and East Germany where they are deployed, and knowing from history the nuisance value of the Poles in revolt, have been anxious to maintain peace at almost any price in Poland. Hence Soviet forbearance with the Polish government which must, in Russian eyes, have looked culpably weak in dealing with opinionated workers and in making concessions which clearly threatened the stability of the Soviet Bloc. Hence the jamming of Western broadcasts capable of vaulting over the Iron Curtain and bringing news into millions of communist homes of the Polish wind of change.

After a return to work had been negotiated, against a background of ministerial and topline party reshufflings, the Poles and their well-wishers abroad stepped back to see whether concessions could in fact be implemented without further breakdowns of order and further recriminations.

It has become clear that some concessions, particularly as regards the Church, could be implemented, that wages could be improved, but that the creation of the free trade unions presented fundamental difficulties and required time and study. The workers might well state emphatically that it was not their object to challenge the leading role of the communist party or the fundamentals of the communist state, or the position of Poland within the Soviet Bloc. But it is by no means clear that agreement to tolerate free trade unions as they are understood in the West is any more realisable, in practice, than Stalin's agreement after the war to tolerate free and fair elections in the Satellite countries.

The reshuffling of Government personalities is not particularly significant. In communist countries ministers can vanish from the government into the organs of the party or the bureaucracy without major upset. Virtually all of the new men are experienced Gierek men or prominent civil servants. The Church, has been a model of patience and restraint, as befits an organization which thinks in decades rather than in days. The unpleasant consequences of bad harvests and the world recession will not easily be dismissed from Poland, but need not necessarily be intolerable. The main conundrum remains: Can the Poles reconcile their aspirations with the constraints imposed by a post-war communist system with which many are disenchanted?

The hope must be that the Poles themselves will work out a tolerable

*modus vivendi.* No outside power wants to see Poland explode, and no outside power can solve the problem for the Poles. Unusually, East and West alike are hoping that the Polish Crisis will be settled without conflict, for if conflict develops there will probably be no winners. Basically, as already mentioned, the Poles have been Christian and westward-looking for a thousand years and communist and eastern-anchored for only thirty-five. In 1980 they revolted against a regime that did not satisfy their aspirations adequately. Their great concern is to muddle through to a better system without setting off the alarm systems that will bring in he Russians. No one can confidently predict whether they can do it, aided by a tacit conspiracy in East and West to help them and prevent an explosion which nobody wants.

The immediate question is whether in 1981 workers allowed by the communist state to elect their own representatives will be able to co-operate with the state without losing the support of their members and without provoking Russian intervention. There is no precedent for the Polish crisis, and as yet no clear indication of the probable outcome.

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[Norman Reddaway, C.B.E., was Ambassador to Poland, 1974-1978. Since retiring from the Diplomatic Service, he has been Chairman of the English Language teaching organisation, English International, a Director of companies, active in Poland and a Trustee or Secretary of various Charitable Trusts. He is the son of the late William Fiddian Reddaway, who was Britain's leading authority on the history of Poland.]

The March issue of *Contemporary Review* includes *Promises: A Contemporary View of the Economy* by Nicholas R. Winterton, M.P., *Risk* by J. H. Fremlin, *The Oil Situation and Producer-Consumer Co-operation* by Mohamed Mazouni and *Oxford of 1887 and Today* by A. L. Rowse.

# SWEDEN VERSUS GREAT BRITAIN AND THE SOVIET UNION DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR

## by Ulf Brandell

WHEN Harold Nicolson was in Stockholm in 1943—he was there to give several lectures—he noted in his diary a conversation with the second in rank at the British legation, the counsellor William Montagu-Pollock (now Sir William Montagu-Pollock):

> He (Montagu-Pollock) says that the Foreign Office does not understand the special relation which Mallet (Sir Victor Mallet) has been able to create with the Swedish government. They are characterised by a cordial comradeship. He has thus succeeded in getting things done in a way which otherwise would not have been possible. But having created this atmosphere it is for him absolutely impossible to give the Swedes a lesson as the Foreign Office now and then instructs him to do.

Looking back, I think that Victor Mallet was a good diplomat, because he counterbalanced the very critical attitude towards Sweden which was often prevalent within the London Foreign Office—an attitude which it is by no means difficult to understand. There were several persons in London who at different times dealt with Sweden; sometimes it was the Foreign Secretary himself, Mr. Anthony Eden. Head of the Northern Department was Christopher Warner, and as a rule it was he who was the voice of the Foreign Office. Even more negative in attitude was Laurence Collier who, during the war, was the British Minister dealing with the Norwegian government-in-exile in London. He seldom missed an opportunity to say something unpleasant about the Swedish government!

On the same day as they attacked Russia, (22nd June 1941) the German government demanded of Sweden permission to have one division transported over Swedish territory from Norway to Finland for use in the fight against Russia. After a heated discussion within the government, with the King intervening in favour, the German transit was permitted as a once-only concession. On the British side there was an immediate, strong reaction. On the 27th June the Swedish minister in London, Mr. Björn Prytz, was summoned to Mr. Eden, who made the following note of the conversation:

> Prytz and all Swedes must be well aware of the German technique. Once Sweden had made a far-reaching concession of this kind it is quite certain that Germany will make further demands and that Sweden would find herself weakened in her power of resistance. Mr. Prytz assured me most earnestly that the Swedish Government was determined to make no further concessions.

A few days later Victor Mallet wrote from Stockholm:

> I venture to submit that from the point of *this* country it is bad tactics for the British press to make too great a fuss about the troop transit in view of the fact that the Soviet Government who are primarily concerned seem to take it very calmly.

Yet in August 1941 the Germans demanded to have another division transported to Finland over Swedish territory. This demand was immediately rejected. However, it was pointed out by the Swedish Foreign Office

that German traffic over Swedish sea-territory could be expanded, apparently without violation of international law.

In London, a discussion took place as to whether the British should more or less invite the Russians to take some action against Sweden. Later, it was to be the other way round. In Stockholm, Victor Mallet was aware that it would not be wise for Sweden to publicise friendship with her new ally, the Soviet Union. In September 1941 he wrote:

> Public sentiment here is very strongly pro-British but even more interested in Finland getting her own back on Russia. For this reason I think it desirable to soft-pedal our Russian alliance and I find that my Soviet colleague, with whom I am on excellent terms, entirely shares my views on this subject.

The first serious British discussion about the position and policy of the Soviet Union after the war ended took place in February 1942. It was then that the Minister without portfolio, the former ambassador in Moscow, Sir Stafford Cripps, made a speech in Bristol where he declared that:

> (a) The Soviet Union after the war could be expected to be the strongest power in Europe, (b) that the Soviet Union could be expected to 'install itself in Berlin' when the fighting stopped, and (c) that the Soviet government had no intention of interfering with the affairs of other states.

Mallet reported immediately that:

> A number of Swedish papers including several that are friendly to our cause have pointed out that such statements as those by Cripps are the worst possible propaganda for the Allies. Not only is the idea that the Soviet Union should dominate Europe most repugnant to Swedish minds, but the suggestion that she should install herself in Berlin is, say the papers, at variance with the spirit of the Atlantic Charter. The fate of Finland, Poland and the Baltic states is cited to show that in the past the Soviet Union has been only too eager to interfere in the affairs of others.

In the Foreign Office there was considerable uneasiness over the speech by Stafford Cripps, but political necessity demanded loyalty to the Soviet Ally. The head of the Northern Department, Christopher Warner, wrote to Mallet as follows:

> I would rather Cripps had not used the phrase about the Soviet sitting in Berlin, which unnecessarily turned the knife in the wound, and may well have been exaggerated. There is however much truth in what he says. Would it not be possible and perhaps effective to take the line that Russia will no doubt have a considerable say in post-war Europe, that she is likely to judge countries by their behaviour during the war and to feel that those countries who have unnecessarily compromised themselves with the Germans do not deserve consideration. This might possibly be supplemented by the implication that this country and America, though perhaps more compassionate, are likely to share the same sentiment to some degree at least, and that Sweden will be well advised to ensure that they feel she deserves their advocacy in the post-war allied councils.

This letter apparently made Mallet extremely angry as can be seen from his reply.

> I don't think it is of the slightest use to tell the Swedes, as you suggest, that the Russians would judge them afterwards in accordance with their performance during the war, nor do I see that this is particularly called for at a time when Madame Kollontay is managing to maintain very decent relations with the Swedish Government and does not herself wish to start threatening them. And

> even if we did begin to take this line in public, no Swede will ever believe that the Russians will show any respect for Sweden's conduct during the war, however good it might be. They consider that Stalin is completely hardboiled and will not be moved by sentiments of sympathy or loving kindness but more by pure expediency.

He goes on to say that:

> The Atlantic Charter forms a much better basis for propaganda and is a powerful weapon in the maintenance of the morale of the Swedish public. If we threaten the Swedes with dire consequences for the future they can and will ask us whether the assurances of the Atlantic Charter are merely scraps of paper.

The Atlantic Charter was formulated by Churchill and Roosevelt in 1941 and was in some ways a forerunner to the declaration of Human rights in the United Nations Charter. However, in the Foreign Office there was no enthusiasm for invoking the Atlantic Charter in Sweden, or using it against the Soviet Union. A few weeks later, in April 1942, the head of the Northern Department, Christopher Warner, sent the following message to Victor Mallet:

> You have lately advocated in various despatches and personal letters that in countering Russian bogey with the Swedes we should make as much play as possible with Atlantic Charter. I am asked to let you know that this theme is somewhat inopportune at this moment and should not be used. (Annexed to this message is a document which is not open to the public and will remain closed until year 2018.)

As already mentioned, when Sweden allowed the German transit of troops in 1941 it was the British Government who first protested. The Soviet Union had taken it more calmly. But by September 1942 the Russian attitude towards Sweden began to change. The Soviet ambassador in London, Maisky, delivered to the Foreign Secretary, Mr. Eden, a copy of a long note of protest which had just been handed to the Swedish minister in Russia. The note ends with the words that 'we have to deal with a systematic and flagrant violation by Sweden of her declared neutrality.' The British Government was requested to take parallel action. In a letter to the British ambassador in Moscow, Clark Kerr, Eden wrote that Maisky did not press that we should present a note similar to that of the Soviet government but he thought that some general statement of our position to the Swedish government at this moment would be useful, in addition to remonstrances on particular points. Mr. Eden, however, did not wish to make common cause with Ambassador Maisky and the Soviet Union. In the letter to Clark Kerr he pointed out that the British and the American governments were negotiating with the Swedish government on two most serious questions—reduced transit of German supplies and troops to Norway over Swedish territory in exchange for an increase in the supply of oil from the West. He pointed out that:

> It should be noted, however that we shall not be able to insist upon compliance with our demands for our military advisers consider that it is to our advantage that the Swedes should have oil in order to maintain their armed forces and keep up their morale in face of German pressure. The question arises whether we should inform Mr. Maisky of these negotiations with the Swedes. Although there is obviously something to be said for being frank with him, on the other hand it is probably unadvisable to let the Russians know the precise nature of

> the negotiations. They are already hampered by the need for prolonged discussions with the Americans and would be impossibly complicated if we were also involved in consultation with the Soviet government, especially as the latter may view the increase of oil supplies to Sweden with suspicion and it may be difficult to convince them of their desirability.

The affair remained for some time a seed of dissension between England and Russia. We are now close to Stalingrad and the subsequent advance of the Red army. It did not seem impossible that the Soviet Union might decide to 'liberate' practically the entire continent before the western powers even had got a foothold. This created some difficulty for the British legation in Stockholm. On the one hand it was necessary to show loyalty towards the Soviet ally, on the other there was no denying that Swedish misgivings in connection with the Russian advance had some foundation.

In February 1943, just after the German surrender at Stalingrad, Victor Mallet reported that Erik Boheman, Secretary of State at the Swedish Foreign Office, had confessed that he was alarmed lest the Russians should advance too fast and reap almost all the fruits of victory before the British and American armies had had time to make their weight felt. If Russia ever got into the Balkans 'we should never succeed in getting her out again.'

In the Foreign Office in London there was praise for Mallet but Mr. Coote, at the Northern Department, had noted 'the Swedes are not alone in hoping that we and the Americans will make our might felt before it is too late!'

In his conversation with Mr. Boheman, the British Minister had shown complete loyalty to the Soviet ally. But somewhat later Mr. Mallet was in trouble. He reported that the assistant head of the political division in the Swedish Foreign Office, Mr. Ragnar Kumlin, later ambassador in Bonn and Paris, had said that it was in everyone's interest that Germany and Russia mutually exhausted each other.

The reaction in London was violent. 'You do not report what reply was made to these remarks,' Mr. Coote at the Northern Department protested, and continued:

> I trust that they were not allowed to pass without an expression of disagreement. It would be highly improper for representatives of His Majesty's Government to allow it to be thought that they agreed with such views. Moreover, that they had done so would be likely sooner or later to reach the ears of the Soviet government with unfortunate results. If similar remarks are made to you, you and your staff should make it clear that the Soviet government are our allies and we have bound ourselves by the Anglo-Soviet treaty of 25th May 1942 to collaborate with them for a period of 25 years. In speaking on these terms you may find it useful and appropriate to refer to Article 5 of the Anglo-Soviet treaty.

In this Article the two governments undertook not to seek territorial expansion and not to interfere in the internal affairs of other states. This was really what the Germans call *Sprachregelung,* although, in his reply, Mallet seems to be fairly submissive:

> I am sorry that I did not make it clear in my earlier despatches that both I myself and members of my staff always attempt to answer such argument in

> whatever way seems best suited to the discussion and we have frequently quoted the terms of the Anglo-Soviet treaty to drive home our point. It had not even occurred to me that you would think it possible that I would condone the Swedish line in the endless conversations which I have with Swedes on the subject of Russia. I gather that the Russians will never allow the independence of the Baltic States to be recreated, and that a loophole can be found for this under the terms of the Anglo-Soviet treaty because the Russians always maintain that the Baltic states voted themselves into the Soviet Union before Germany's attack upon Russia. As regards Finland, the Swedes feel that the treaty must apply, at least as regards the 1940 frontiers—that is, the frontiers *after* the winter war between Finland and Soviet—but they have never given any indication that this is understood to be the case.

Here, Finland comes into the picture. It is difficult to say how many times Mallet reported the intensity of Swedish opinion about the fate of Finland, and how important this was for the Swedish attitude towards Russia. At the highest level, Mr. Eden was conscious of this, as can be seen from his telegram to Mr. Churchill during the Foreign Minister's conference in the autumn 1943. 'If the Russians are prepared to make it clear to the Swedes that after the war there will be an independent Finland, that would influence Sweden in a noticeable way.' At the Moscow conference Stalin himself spoke of Sweden in rather harsh terms, declaring that the Scandinavian peninsula was a good base from which to attack Germany. He accused the western powers of sending foodstuffs to Sweden and not extending the blockade to her. From London, a telegram was immediately sent with the heading 'Soviet proposals regarding Sweden'. 'Of course we are blockading Sweden,' it read, 'in the sense that nothing can go to Sweden without the definite permission of ourselves and the Americans!'

As to the use of Swedish territory for air raids over Germany, Churchill sent a telegram to Eden as follows:

> Our range from England over Germany is just as good as from Sweden. In fact, with present British facilities plus those we hope to acquire north of Rome there is no part of Germany we cannot reach with great weight.

A few days later Ambassador Clark Kerr in Moscow reported to London that Mr. Molotov (the Soviet foreign minister) had said that the Soviets themselves did not wish to use bases in Sweden. He expressed disappointment that none of the Soviet proposals for shortening the war appeared to have support. Soon afterwards Sir Alexander Cadogan, the Permanent Under Secretary of State, made a memorandum that Mr. Molotov was disappointed at our negative attitude and it would be well to try to make some positive proposal. Later, Cadogan wrote to a Brigadier at the War Cabinet Offices asking him to arrange for the Chiefs of Staffs to consider what, if anything, 'we could usefully ask the Swedes to give us in way of operational facilities.' By this time the movements of German soldiers on leave from and to Norway over Swedish territory had ended, also the transport of German war material.

Then came the landings in France. The war was drawing to its close and there was little interest in Sweden. But signs of a divergence of views between the western powers and the Soviet Union were increasing. This became obvious during the discussion about a Swedish armed intervention

in Norway in the spring 1945. The Norwegian government in London was much in favour and Mr. Churchill himself wrote to Mr. Eden on April 15th that 'few questions are more important than bringing the Swedes into the war to liberate their Norwegian brother State.'

The Swedish policy, which was based on information from the Norwegian homefront, was that the German troops in Norway could be expected to surrender at the same time as the troops on the continent. But plans were made for an armed Swedish intervention in both Denmark and Norway. However, the significant thing was that the Soviet government let it be known to the Swedish Foreign Office that, as Mallet reported, the Soviet government would not relish Swedish intervention in Norway. This created a considerable unease within the Swedish Foreign Office. The reason for the Russian attitude was, presumably, that Swedish intervention could have led to cooperation with British and American forces, and thus bring Sweden into the western camp, a development that the Soviet government wished to prevent.

After the war ended, Sir Victor Mallet left Sweden and was succeeded by Mr. Jerram. On October 1st, 1945 he wrote to the new Foreign Secretary in London, Mr. Ernest Bevin, mentioning a conversation with a young Swedish diplomat, Sverker Aström, now ambassador in Paris. Aström had, he explains, a knowledge of the Soviet Union which entitled him to speak with some authority and goes on to report that:

> Lately, he (Aström) had had conversations with a number of Russians who were all of the opinion that Sweden was interested in joining a Western bloc. Worse still, they believed that Sweden was instigating a Nordic bloc which would be the spearhead of an Anglo-Saxon move against the Soviet Union. The Soviet campaign, he thought, was designed to upset and frighten the Swedes. [Here we have an explanation of the furious Soviet campaign against the neutral Nordic bloc which Sweden tried to create in 1948-49 as an alternative to Denmark and Norway joining Nato.]

Mr. Jerram ends his report by saying that Mr. Aström made one other rather important and somewhat disquieting point. He had, he said, noticed an anti-British tone among his Russian friends. Thus was born the period of the cold war.

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Much of the information given in this article is derived from correspondence between the British Legation (as it then was) in Stockholm and the Foreign Office in London over the period of January 1940 until the end of World War II.

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[Ulf Brandell is a distinguished Swedish writer, historian and journalist. From 1948 until 1972 he was foreign editor of the liberal Stockholm newspaper *Dagens Nyheter*.]

# THE PROSPECT FOR NIGERIA

## by Douglas Rimmer

NIGERIANS have made giant strides since they attained political independence twenty years ago, and more especially since the end of their civil war in 1970. Their advance is likely to continue.

Nobody had ground to foresee such progress in 1960, and the early years of independence were anything but propitious. A problem of external debt was incipient as government spending gathered momentum and financial reserves were depleted. The statutory marketing monopolies and so-called development institutions created among the last benefactions of colonialism were already a byword for inefficiency and corruption. The national plan of 1962 preached economic criteria, but in practice the five governments constituting the Federal Republic were beyond co-ordination. Politics at both national and more local levels were transparently a scramble for spoils; for this reason it proved impossible in 1962, and again in 1963, to conduct a credible census of population. In 1964 a general strike of wage-earners was organised on the premise that the division of the spoils was unfair. No holds were barred as the political parties wrestled for support. Elections in 1964 and 1965 were accompanied and followed by violence and intimidation, and the results blatantly rigged. In January 1966 the political structure collapsed like a house of cards when a small group of middle-ranking army officers revolted against its evident immorality.

The succeeding military administrations proved initially even less capable of reconciling the many divergent interests of Nigerians. Pogroms were launched against Ibo people living in the north, a second coup killed off the original military leadership, the Eastern Region seceded, and the civil war begun in July 1967 'to keep Nigeria one' was ended in January 1970 only by the envelopment and exhaustion of the insurgents.

From these dire beginnings independent Nigeria has emerged as unquestionably the leading power in Black Africa—not only in population (probably about 70 million), but also in productive capacity, military strength and political influence. The estimates of GDP (Gross Domestic Product) have increased at an annual average rate of 7.5 per cent since the civil war. Manufacturing output has grown at over 10 per cent, and power consumption about 20 per cent annually. Exports have probably more than quadrupled in real value in a decade, and the import market in 1980 is worth about US$16,000 million. The current revenues of the Federal government have increased from some 600 million naira in 1970 to perhaps 15,000 million in 1980, say sixfold in real terms (the naira is currently worth about US$1.85 and £0.80 sterling at the official rates).

The combination of military government and this fiscal transformation produced centralisation of power and allowed several key political innovations. The replacement of the four Regions of the federation by 12 States (later increased to 19) was a tactical move immediately preceding the

Eastern secession but was to prove of permanent importance. General Gowon's insistence on the reconciliation of opponents following the war deserves to be mentioned. The federal government undertook in 1976 a reformation of local authorities throughout the country. The decision was taken to replace Lagos as capital by a new city to be built far inland at Abuja. The armed forces were reduced from their quarter-million wartime strength but remain large (about 160,000 men), and political leadership in Africa has been consciously sought.

Commitments to restore civilian government were revoked by Gowon in 1974, but his successors announced another programme for the army's withdrawal fro mpower and kept faithfully to it despite the assassination of their leader, Murtala Mohammed, in 1976. A new constitution was written, party politics were allowed to revive under rather stringent legal conditions, and elections (at which women in the north were enfranchised for the first time) took place in July and August 1979 for a Federal Senate and House of Representatives, State Assemblies and Governorships, and the Presidency. The first year of operation of the new constitution has been, like the conduct of the elections, by no means free from dissension, but Nigerian politics have become somewhat less acrimonious in their style and much less dangerous in their implications than they were in the unhappy years of the First Republic.

Oil has been the foundation of both the rapid economic growth and the relatively healthy political evolution of the country. Though commercial oil production was begun by Shell-BP at the end of 1957, there was little understanding for several years of the impact it would have on the Nigerian economy, and more particularly on the public finances. Although output was already following a rapidly rising trend (from just over half a million barrels per day on average in 1969 to 2.25 million in 1974), it was not until 1973 that the decisive changes occurred. In October of that year, as American import demand for oil grew, the member-governments of OPEC finally wrested control over pricing from the multinational oil companies, and in the space of a few months they approximately quadrupled the prices on which tax liabilities in oil mining were calculated. In Nigeria the tax-take per barrel reached $10 in 1974, as compared with less than one dollar (on only half as much total production) in 1970. A cornucopia became suddenly apparent.

At the same time, and again in line with OPEC policies, the government was acquiring participation in the ownership of producing concessions through the statutory body now known as the NNPC (Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation). This public stake became 55 per cent in 1974. It was to be raised in 1979 to 80 per cent in Shell-BP, the major producer, and 60 per cent in the five other producing companies.

The Nigerian authorities responded with alacrity to their new-found abundance. Indeed, the wastes associated with their efforts to buy more than the economy could deliver, especially in 1975, are among the sharpest illustrations of the military government's shortcomings. Given a compulsion to spend, subsequent failures of oil proceeds to continue to rise, as

had been anticipated, led to agonised budgetary reappraisals, particularly in 1978. But the momentum was restored in Nigeria by the interruptions in world oil supplies resulting from the Iranian revolution at the end of 1978 and the war between Iraq and Iran that began in September 1980. The total state take from oil (in petroleum profits tax, mining royalties, and earnings of the NNPC) consequently rose from some $9,000 million in 1978 to $16,000 million in 1979 and probably $25,000 million in 1980. In 1970 it had been less than $350 million.

Oil has thus come to contribute over one-quarter of the GDP estimate, more than nine-tenths of export earnings, and in most years about four-fifths of government revenues. Profound implications follow. The economy has become more unstable, albeit at a level of national income almost unimaginably high from the standpoint of 1960. It has become more firmly locked into the economies of the Western world as a supplier of energy and a market for manufactures, especially producers' goods. And the economic life of Nigeria has become strongly collectivised as a result of the concentration of earnings from oil in public hands. Government consumption of goods and services currently claims about 20 per cent of the GDP, and public capital formation perhaps another 25 per cent. Less than half is used in private or household consumption, and it appears from the official estimates that private consumption averaged over population has not increased at all during a decade of prodigious economic growth.

It follows that most Nigerians have depended heavily on government services and amenities for improvement in their lot. In fact, direct delivery of welfare figured prominently in the third national plan inaugurated in 1975. The poorer sections of the population were to receive subsidised public services, including electricity, water supplies, health services, co-operatives and community development in the rural areas and low-income housing in the towns. As a first step, fee-free primary education became available throughout the country in September 1976. Such measures were held to be the most practicable way of altering the distribution of income. It is unlikely that they do much to reduce inter-household inequality, but they may be effective, if continued long enough, in diminishing disparities among States and among communities within States, and that may count for more with most Nigerians.

Even more conspicuous among the planning objectives of the 1970s was assertion of national autonomy. Removal of dependence on foreign aid was one dimension of this programme and it was soon achieved (though some $2,500 million has been raised in medium-term loans from foreign banks since 1978). Increased economic diversification, especially in manufacturing, was another. Modern manufacturing has been concentrated in production of finished consumer goods, with relatively weak output of semi-products and negligible engineering. Attempts to remedy its deficiencies include public investment in steelmaking, oil refining, petrochemicals, fertilisers, truck and car assembly, and the liquefaction of natural gas for export. Progress has usually been slower than planned, but

there is little doubt that a much more integrated and technically sophisticated manufacturing sector will have evolved by the late 1980s.

A third aspect of 'economic independence' has been displacement of foreign ownership in (and, to a less extent, foreign control of) business enterprises. The federal government has acquired participation, often as majority shareholder, not only in the oil and gas industries but also in banking and insurance and all those newly established or projected industries deemed to be of strategic importance, while the two new oil refineries at Warri and Kaduna are entirely in public ownership. In addition, the business indigenisation decrees of 1972 and 1977 obliged foreign enterprises to vacate activities normally conducted on a small scale and now reserved to Nigerians, and to accommodate in other activities Nigerian holdings of 40 or 60 per cent of share capital; the indigenous investors have included public bodies, notably State governments, as well as private capitalists.

This extension of indigenous (and often public) ownership in mining, manufacturing, construction and services has been among the most striking changes in the Nigerian economic landscape since 1970. Others are the great expansion of formal education (primary school enrolments reached 11.5 million in 1980, a surge in secondary enrolments is expected in 1982, and there will soon be 20 universities), and the much enhanced physical infrastructure. The latter is most evident in roads, ports and public buildings. Power supply, telecommunications and internal air transport have fought a losing battle to keep up with rapidly rising demand. The railways await rehabilitation. Water supply and sanitation are the most gravely defective area of public provision.

Agriculture is commonly said to be in decline, but the statistical evidence does not exist to show any absolute contraction, and it remains the livelihood of perhaps two-thirds of the labour force. Agricultural *exports* have certainly declined, some of them to vanishing point, and of the old staples—groundnuts, palm produce and cocoa—only the last remains important. The chief reason is the pull of home markets, partly for the crops themselves and partly for land and labour previously used in their production. Similarly, a rising trend in food imports is evidence less of agricultural contraction than of the limited ability of farmers to adapt to a shift of tastes in favour of wheat, sugar, fish, milk and rice, as incomes have risen and the population has become more urbanised. Rigidities in agricultural production are mainly attributable to natural conditions and the government's reluctance to allow free play to market forces.

The passage from military to civilian government in 1979 was smoother than many people expected, especially with regard to contemporaneous events in Ghana. Five parties qualified to contest the elections; though four had obvious historical links with parties under the First Republic, they were able to convince the Federal Electoral Commission that they were organised on a national rather than a regional basis. An electorate of over 47 million was registered. Implying a total population of about 100 million, far higher than the most extravagant estimate, it was evidently

inflated grossly, just as had been the censuses in earlier years, and the maximum electoral turn-out did not in fact exceed 17 million.

All five parties were successful in winning not only seats but also governorships and majorities in State Assemblies. Some ethnic complexion appeared inevitably in the voting patterns at both national and State levels. Most notably, the strength of the UPN (Unity Party of Nigeria) was concentrated in the four largely Yoruba States of the old Western Region (Lagos, Ogun, Ondo and Oyo) and in Bendel, the former Mid-West. The NPP (Nigerian People's Party) won the Ibo States of Anambra and Imo in the east, but was also predominant in Plateau State in the old north. The rest of the north was divided among the Great Nigerian People's Party or GNPP (Borno and Gongola), the People's Redemption Party or PRP (Kano), and the National Party of Nigeria or NPN. The NPN was successful in six northern States (Bauchi, Benue, Kaduna, Kwara, Niger, Sokoto) and in the two eastern states (Cross River and Rivers) peopled by ethnic minorities. Governorships corresponded with party majorities in the Assemblies in every State but Kaduna, where the PRP candidate won the executive office.

In the elections for the National Assembly, the NPN won 38 per cent of the seats in both the Senate and the House of Representatives, and the NPP 17 per cent. The UPN won 30 per cent of the Senate and 25 per cent of the House, and the remaining seats were shared by the GNPP and the PRP.

In the presidential election, Alhaji Shehu Shagari of the NPN received 33.8 per cent of the votes recorded, Chief Awolowo of the UPN 29.2 per cent, Dr. Azikiwe of the NPP 16.7 per cent, Alhaji Aminu Kano of the PRP 10.3 per cent, and Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim of the GNPP 10.0 per cent. A plurality of votes sufficed for election, provided the candidate had also received at least one-quarter of the votes in each of at least two-thirds of the States. In the event, Shehu Shagari qualified for election only by a ruling of the Electroral Commission (supported by the High Court) that two-thirds of the 19 States were not 13, as might have been supposed, but twelve and two-thirds. Given the need for this ruling, the dubiety of the electoral register and allegations of irregularities in voting, the outcome of the elections might be thought providential, since support for the NPN and for Shagari personally was undoubtedly more widely distributed in the country than that for their nearest rivals, the UPN and Awolowo. A victory for the clearly defined Yoruba interest would have been less readily stomached.

A tactical alliance was subsequently made between the NPN and the NPP to secure a majority in the National Assembly for the new federal executive. But in practice contests between the legislative and executive arms of government have turned out scarcely less significantly than party rivalry under Nigeria's new American-style constitution.

Nigerian society remains fisured by communal, ethnic and religious affiliations, and the tensions so often apparent in its history have not been removed. Censuses of the population have failed on three occasions (the

last in 1973) and the next attempt may be a flashpoint in 1983 (which is also the year of the next round of elections). New formulae for allocating federally-collected revenues among the governments are under debate, with the States pressing for larger shares (and perhaps for more control over local authorities) than the federal government wishes to concede, and the oil producing States (principally Bendel, Rivers and Cross River) arguing for reassertion of the principle of derivation that mainly governed such allocations until the early 1970s. Agitation for the creation of more States, which was thought to have been silenced when the number was increased to 19 in 1976, has revived with the return to civilian government, and is likely to be appeased despite impediments that were deliberately written into the constitution. The problem of how to create an acceptable degree of probity in public office has not been solved. Controversy is potential in the concept of the 'federal character' of Nigeria, according to which indifference to the communal or ethnic origin of any individual is to be demonstrated by adequate representation of all communities and ethnic groups in appointments to office. While the constitution specifically enjoins the 'federal character' only on the President's selection of ministers and the composition of the armed forces, the concept is capable of almost indefinite application and could seriously aggravate, especially in the public sector, difficulties which are already acute in finding qualified professional and technical personnel.

The conduct of Nigerian affairs will therefore continue to demand astute statecraft. But it is a task likely to be alleviated in the future, as in the recent past, by a long official purse. No doubt there are more vicissitudes to be undergone in the world market for energy, on which Nigerian prosperity so heavily depends, but on trend it is likely to remain more a seller's than a buyer's market. Oil reserves will last until early in the next century at the present rate of extraction (2.2 million barrels per day)—probably longer, if the multinationals are sensibly handled and exploration continues. The vast reserves of natural gas, as yet barely exploited, should give a further powerful fillip to economic growth and public revenues by the mid-1980s. Industrialisation will continue and agriculture should become more productive as distributive costs fall. The economic prospect for Nigeria is fair, and so long as it remains so the unity of the country should survive without benefit of further military intervention.

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[Douglas Rimmer is Deputy Director and Senior Lecturer in Economics, Centre of West African Studies, University of Birmingham. He is co-author (with Anthony Kirk-Greene) of *Nigeria since* 1970, a forthcoming survey of political and economic change in that country, and is a contributor to a forthcoming collection of studies in *The Political Economy of Income Distribution in Nigeria,* edited by Henry Bienen and V. P. Diejomaoh.]

# ALCOHOLISM: THE NEW PANDEMIC

## by J. A. Loraine

FOR over 50,000 years of history alcohol has been a double-dealer with man. We, the global citizens of 1981, have inherited its rewards; but as overdrinking spreads at a well-nigh frenetic pace the proclivity of alcohol for punishment becomes increasingly obtrusive. Nor is this concern any new thing. Towards the end of the previous century, a series of erudite and prescient articles on alcoholism in *Contemporary Review* contributed to the debate.

Primitive man was highly inventive. Hunter gatherers soon learned to produce wine and beer from fruits, flowers, honey, milk and many forms of grain. The 'drink food' had for them an aura of magic. It relieved pain, assuaged fatigue, evoked gaiety and conviviality, even facilitated contact with the spirits that controlled their destiny. Soon, alcoholic beverages came to be associated with religious rituals; with births, marriages and funerals; with making war and achieving peace and, last but not least, with the practice of medicine.

Early accounts of the effects of alcohol tended to be adulatory. A Biblical poet proclaimed 'wine will rejoice the heart of man', while in the Odyssey we are told that 'wine sets even a thoughtful man to singing, or sets him softly laughing'. However, the malign effects of the drug were not entirely discounted. Hippocrates noted that many febrile illnesses began with a bout of heavy drinking and one of his patients made sick by alcohol showed rigors, could not sleep and became delirious and incoherent. The Greeks poured opprobrium on female drunkenness in coruscating terms, indicating that female libation is no modern phenomenon. That the drunken were unduly accident prone was well documented, and potentates, philosophers and prophets combined to condemn *à toute outrance* the self-injurious effects of alcoholic beverages. It is of especial interest that the writings of Aristotle contained references to abnormal babies born to drinking parents. This presaged recognition of the foetal alcohol syndrome in the late 20th Century AD, of the fact that children born of alcoholic mothers tended to be underweight for their stage of pregnancy and after birth were slow to grow and develop.

Christian culture in Europe did not oppose drinking. Again, ambivalance was the touchstone. Alcoholic intoxication was, of course, a sin, just like avarice or gluttony; and no social class was exempt from such criticism. Nevertheless, a variety of religious orders went into the manufacturing business and were soon producing the most delectable of beverages.

By the Elizabethan age distillation had become established in Europe. This manifestly intensified the problem because now, instead of potions containing only about 15% of alcohol, people could readily obtain beverages with concentrations of 50% and upwards. This was the era during which the ambivalent approach to drinking reached its apotheosis.

The pharmacological effects of alcohol now came faster and more readily; also, they were much more potent. Fulsome panegyrics were uttered to the euphoria produced by *aquae vitae* (the modern Scandinavian *akvavit*) by *usque-baugh*—Gaelic for the water of life, soon to have the appellation whisky—and by vodka—that dear water of Russia. Yet at the same time and especially in contemporary England, distilled spirits in the form of gin were castigated as the initiator of all social evils, as the latter-day Mephistopheles, and the quintessential enemy of the lower classes. In the USA a similar catharsis was taking place. The Demon Rum came under concentrated attack in many parts of the country and the foremost physician of the time, Benjamin Rush of Philadelphia, challenged the popular belief that spirits were health-giving and dubbed habitual drunkenness a serious disease and a manifest addiction.

But to return to the attitudes of the late eighteen-hundreds; in November 1878 James Paget wrote for *Contemporary Review* an encomium for moderation in the use of alcoholic drinks. To him this was the quiddity, the bedrock on which the habit must rest. The practice of drinking was 'generally beneficial'; *vis-à-vis* working power, whether bodily or mental, the advantage was on the side of those who used alcoholic beverages. Paget went on to list such advantages, mentioning particularly increased longevity, greater activity and a better quality of life. He drew analogies with other medicaments in wide use at the time. Thus quinine, which in large doses could cause blindness and deafness, in smaller quantities could cure ague. Arsenic, a lethal poison in immoderate amounts, when given in small doses could alleviate neuralgia and some skin diseases. T. Lauder Brunton in the same number of the journal promulgated the view no longer accepted that alcohol in small doses acted as a stimulant to the circulation and especially to the central nervous system; mental processes become more rapid, speaking and writing easier. Brunton reminded us that Sheridan delivered his greatest speech 'under the influence of two bottles of champagne which he had swallowed at a single draught'; also, he was impressed with the fact that people 'of over-cautious temperament and too reserved manners' lost their restraints and became more sociable and agreeable after a small libation. The third article in this number of *Contemporary Review* by Albert J. Bernays, criticised intemperance but supported 'moderate alcoholism' and went on to laud Mr. Gladstone for reducing the price of wine which 'when mixed with water . . . forms a pleasant and wholesome summer-drink, free from danger and not alcoholic beyond the quality of good bitter-beer'. Bernays strongly believed that the 'alcohol question' could not be solved by draconian forms of legislation; rather, attempts should be made to raise the general condition of the people, to teach children from a very young age that temperance should be their *leit motif*, not only in the consumption of alcohol but in other modalities of life as well.

The following month *Contemporary Review* continued the debate. An article by that doyen of medicine, Sir William Gull, cast grave doubts on the medicinal value of alcohol. Fever could be satisfactorily treated without it; the continued ingestion of alcohol was certainly deleterious to health

—liver, blood, lungs, heart, brain and kidneys were the main organs affected. Restraint in usage was difficult if not impossible; the term dipsomania was a mere euphemism for incorrigible drunkenness. Should a man destroying himself by drink be allowed to go without punishment, the writer asked? Not at all, was the reply. Instead, 'riotous drunkards who have been convicted a hundred and fifty times' should be treated as common criminals.

Charles Murchison, in the same issue of *Contemporary Review*, came out strongly against the still continuing practice of treating all acute diseases with large quantities of alcohol. To him 'the brittle artery; the softened heart; the diseased liver or the gouty kidney' could well have been postponed had temperance been insisted upon. Walter Moxon, discoursing on the reasons for the occurrence of alcoholism in the individual, referred to the brutal life which many people were forced to endure and how under such circumstances alcohol seemed the ideal anodyne, tantamount to a latter-day Ambrosia. His comments about national characteristics in Britain make fascinating reading more than 100 years later. Thus, the English showed commonsense and balance and were usually intelligent. In Ireland 'a little spirit excites them much'. The Scots were Liberals and fond of education; they 'take a great deal of whisky without much harm'.

Returning to the medicinal uses of alcohol, Samuel Wilks mused on the lack of knowledge concerning the fate of the drug in the body. Once it passed the hungry throat 'its history was involved in the utmost obscurity'. Wilks would have been astonished and possibly somewhat awed by the plethora of literature on ethanol metabolism available in 1981. But on one point he was adamant, and has proved to be correct—alcohol is sedative and narcotic rather than stimulant in its action. He cited its ability to relieve the neuralgia of toothache, its efficacy as an anaesthetic—as beneficial as chloroform in his opinion—its penchant for deadening feelings and soothing the nervous system when 'all the world is dark around and the sensibilities are pain to wretchedness . . .'. But alcohol was no panacea. Not everyone who was weak and tired required it; children and women should eschew it; on no account should it be taken early in the day.

Another contribution by *Contemporary Review* to the alcohol question was an article in the May 1899 number by Thomas Holmes, which dealt with habitual inebriates. The article followed the passage of a Parliamentary Act in 1898, was based on the author's experience at the bench and dealt mainly with female drunkenness. Holmes referred to 'demented women' appearing before magistrates and, after summary conviction, attaining obscurity in a lunatic asylum. Promiscuity and alcoholism were inextricably linked; that 'gross overmastering passion' which many prostitutes exhibited was alcohol-dictated and as their sexual powers waned the drug became their only solace. Men were not excluded from this notable piece of polemical writing; obloquy was heaped on the heads of loafers and hangers-on at public houses, on beggars and *habitués* in cheap lodging houses; most contemptible of all were those who lived on the

immorality of women. The Parliamentary Act was deeply flawed. It scarcely touched the 'fringe of inebriety'. In particular, no relief was offered to honest, well-doing and industrious men married to drunken spouses. Their money could be squandered, their possessions pawned, their children neglected or assaulted, their life made a veritable hell.

Certainly, by the dawn of the 20th Century teetotallers were in full cry in many parts of the Western world. Not only the intemperant were denounced; anyone making use of alcoholic liquors was equally culpable. Especially in the USA, where with the spread of the frontier westward the drinking habits of soldiers, Indians, settlers and cowboys became ever more exposed to public scrutiny, the anti-alcohol movement gained adherents and political clout.

A powerful catalyst to temperance was provided by the outbreak of the First World War. The then Chancellor of the Exchequer in Britain, David Lloyd George, appalled by the drunkenness amongst munition workers which was preventing necessary armaments from reaching troops on the Western Front, averred that Britain was fighting three enemies, Germany, Austria and drink; and according to him the last named was by far the most nefarious. In the USA by 1920 the Volstead Act had been passed by the Congress and prohibition had won legislative approval in most states.

But the corpse refused to play dead. Public defiance erupted; this was the era of the speakeasy, of moonshine, smuggling, bootlegging and corruption unprecedented even by US standards. Prohibition was soon on the ebb tide and by 1933 it had been consigned to the rubbish heap of history. The new legislation, though still preaching temperance, was protean in character. Some states permitted the private distribution of alcohol; others had their own state-owned liquor stores; some laws prohibited unescorted women to enter public houses; others stated that drink could only be served with food, citing the example of Sweden as the ideal solution to the problem.

Then, in the mid-1930s a *tranche* of science was injected into the arena. Legislation had by and large been ineffectual in attenuating alcoholism; so had the fear of hellfire, damnation and disease. The paramountcy of the scientific method was predictable and assured for the rest of the century. Surely its power and eclecticism of viewpoint could be brought to bear on overdrinking and in this way mankind could be steered off the reefs and the shoals?

As often under such circumstances the scientific dynamic originated in the USA. A Research Council on Problems of Alcohol came into being and a Centre for Alcohol Studies was established at Rutgers University where a dedicated and forceful director, E. M. Jellinek, was appointed.

*Pari passu* with the scientific approach to alcoholism another phenomenon emerged and reached its apogee in the mid-1940s after which it tended to wane. This was, of course, Alcoholics Anonymous. The organisation proselytised for the concept that most alcoholics were not social pariahs destined for Skid Row. Instead, with effective counselling

and advice the condition was eminently tractable and the individual could be restored to health, family and society.

For the past 30 years the 'disease concept' of alcoholism has been firmly in the saddle. Habitual drunkenness is no longer to be regarded as a vice. Alcoholics should not be on the receiving end of punishment and blame. Instead, they are sick and need treatment and rehabilitation. Research has been geared to early detection, to the psychological diathesis predisposing the individual to excessive drinking, to the possibility of genetic abnormalities, to disorders in the manner in which alcoholics handled their drug of dependence. Yet in spite of this approach the incidence of alcoholism has risen inexorably in virtually every country of the world and by the late 1970s doubts were being increasingly expressed about its efficacy and validity.

R. E. Kendell, in a perceptive and much quoted article in the *British Medical Journal* in 1979, regards alcoholism as a political, social and environmental problem to which medicine *per se* has little to offer. His paper cites a recent study at the prestigious Maudsley Hospital in London which clearly illustrates this point. A hundred married men referred to an alcoholism clinic were randomly assigned to two alternative regimes. Half were offered the full range of treatment facilities—regular psychiatric appointments for themselves and their wives, the assistance of social workers, a plethora of sedative drugs, contact with the local branch of Alcoholics Anonymous. The other half 'were simply told in a suitably solemn manner and in the presence of their wives that they must stop drinking completely and that responsibility for doing so rested entirely with them'. At the end of one year the groups were carefully assessed and although there had been improvement in individual cases no significant differences in drinking patterns between them emerged.

During the Sixties and Seventies a really gargantuan increase in alcoholism occurred at the global level. For much of the era prosperity reigned in the developed world; affluence was on the increase as economic growth rates soared. In developing countries increased production and consumption of alcohol was especially marked. Home-produced brews have become much less popular and are being replaced by commercially brewed and distilled beverages, a situation notably exacerbated by the rapid drift of population from rural areas to cities. Asia, Africa and Latin America are all encountering the problem and, in the last mentioned, mortality figures for alcohol-related diseases are amongst the highest in the world. This is particularly so in industrialised and semi-industrialised countries in the region; as for instance, Chile, Argentina and Mexico.

The paramountcy of social and environmental factors in relation to alcoholism is by now well recognised. For example, alcoholism tends to be more common in urban than rural areas. Heavy drinking is known to be associated with occupation. Those with the easiest access to it and the money to buy it—company directors and managers, publicans, actors, politicians, the armed forces, medical practitioners to name a few—being most at risk. Also, alcoholics differ from the general population in marital

status, rates being higher in bachelors and spinsters, widowers, widows and divorced people.

There will be more alcoholic women in ensuing decades. In 1960 the proportion of alcoholic men to women in Western countries was reported at 1: 5; now the corresponding figure is only 1: 3. No single cause can be cited for the rise in incidence of female drinking. Some attribute it to their less restricted life styles over the past 20 years, others to the growing influence of the women's liberation movement. Contributory factors which have been blamed include pressures exerted by alcoholic parents, especially the father, emotional deprivation at an early age and the fact that within a large family the child may be the first or last born. Whatever the reasons, the social stigma remains. Whereas male intoxication is still viewed with indifference, resignation, amusement and sometimes compassion, no such indulgence is provided to the woman.

Drinking amongst young people is a topic that arouses much emotion and controversy. The media constantly refer to it and the linkage is explicit with deviant forms of social behaviour including drug abuse, promiscuity, violence and delinquency. Certainly young people, men especially, are drinking much more than in previous decades. In young women also excessive drinking is on the increase and the gap between the sexes is narrowing quite rapidly. Parental influences, especially an alcoholic father, seem to be of special importance here; heavy drinking among friends tends to lower the age at which alcohol is incorporated into the lifestyle of the individual. Economic circumstances undoubtedly play a role, the relatively affluent amongst young people tending to be the heavier drinkers.

What of the future? Clearly our efforts to combat alcoholism are going badly and, in particular, medical treatment has been shown to be singularly ineffective. Is there any means whereby the tide can be turned? As mentioned earlier, Kendell is one who firmly believes that alcoholism is a social and political rather than a medical problem. His main plea is for an alteration in the price and availability of alcoholic beverages, and he cites numerous historical examples where this course of action has been effective. Thus in Britain beer consumption dropped markedly when the duty first imposed in 1643 was tripled in 1690. The Defence of the Realm Act in 1914 which restricted the opening of public houses likewise caused a decrease in consumption. Conversely when, in 1880, Mr. Gladstone in the wake of increasing national prosperity, reduced taxation on alcoholic beverages, consumption of beer and wines throughout Britain rose dramatically. *A propos* the toxicity of alcohol Kendell posits that were the substance new, and had it to penetrate the safety net of the Committee on the Safety of Medicines in the UK, it would certainly not gain clearance and could not be administered to the public.

Under conditions of mass unemployment the incidence of alcoholism could rise even more steeply than at present, as individuals seek relief from boredom and psychological tensions and endeavour to escape into a world of make-believe. Already evidence culled from the USA supports

this contention. There the sociologist, Harvey Brenner, from the Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore studied the effect produced by a 1% increase in the jobless rate in the USA between 1970 and 1975. He found an increase in overall morbidity and mortality and, in particular, he reported that deaths from liver disease ascribed to excessive alcohol consumption rose dramatically. Brenner later confirmed his work in the different cultural setting of England and Wales.

The modern pandemic of alcoholism is most unlikely to disappear, as must have been obvious to *Contemporary Review* contributors one hundred years ago, even though they could scarcely have anticipated the dimensions of the present problem, inflated as it is by the massive power of advertising and the media. Unfortunately, at the dawn of 1981, there is no indication that innovative forces to counteract the menace are anywhere in the ascendancy.

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[John A. Loraine, D.Sc, MB, Ph.D, FRCPEd, FRSA, FRSE, is Senior Lecturer, Department of Community Medicine and Director, Centre for Human Ecology, University of Edinburgh.]

# THE 'GOOD LIFE' AND THE NEW TECHNOLOGY

## by Viscount Thurso

EACH year at the beginning of August we move house to a shooting lodge in the hills of Caithness, which is 20 miles from the nearest village up a single-track gravel road. It is too far to bring electricity and so we have kept the candles and Aladdin lamps. Every year a supply of peat has to be cut in order to provide heat and we have to make our own arrangements for the disposal of rubbish because council scavenging lorries do not penetrate so far into the wilderness.

In recent years because we can neither afford to pay for, nor easily find, the staff to run a household in this way, concessions have had to be made to modern technology. We have had to get an electric light engine to light the gamekeeper's house and some of its electricity has been allowed to penetrate into the kitchen of the lodge. The cooker has been converted from peat burning to oil and we have acquired a Calor gas cooker as well. Domestic water is now heated by gas and the latest concession is that an electric plug has appeared in the hall, so that a vacuum cleaner with a very long flex can get round the reception rooms downstairs.

Even so, friends who come from the south think it is wonderfully old-fashioned and romantic and we too, are still prepared to go to the extra trouble, effort and occasional inconvenience of living this way, for a short time each year, for the sake of the nostalgia which is conjured up by the delicate aroma of peat smoke and the soft flickering light of the candles.

We know, however, that we can only enjoy this sort of holiday because we pay extra for it in time, effort and cash. We could not possibly live a normal twentieth-century life in these conditions and would be horrified at the thought of being condemned to live in them for evermore. A person who has not lived this kind of life at all simply has no idea what sheer grinding slavery it is; unless of course you have a large staff of slaves who can be ground instead of you. Drawing water from the well instead of having a pump deliver it to a tap; cutting and stacking peat or wood to dry for the winter instead of plugging in an electric fire; trimming the wicks and filling the lamps each day instead of flicking an electric light switch; carting away the rubbish, digging a hole and burying it instead of putting out the plastic bag once or twice a week; all these activities consume the time and energy which otherwise one would put into the enjoyment of civilisation. Civilisation, I here define, as leisure for the enjoyment and development of the arts and taking a lively and informed interest in current affairs, both world-wide and as they affect the government and administration of one's own country.

It is energy as a power source which makes civilisation possible and frees mankind from the slavery of a subsistence economy. Those countries which have climbed out of this kind of existence as a result of the Industrial Revolution will never willingly go back to it and any country which sees the possibility of throwing off the bondage of poverty will seek to free

itself. 'The Good Life' which the Third World 'enjoys' is only romantic so long as you don't have to 'enjoy' it yourself. Even the hippies who affect to despise our materialist society can only do so because that same society supports their existence, whether they like it or not.

Our present civilisation is founded on technologies which largely depend upon the consumption of energy in the form of fossil fuels and so great is the consumption of these fuels by developed countries that few, if any of them, can enjoy or maintain their present level of civilisation without buying in energy from outside their boundaries. We, in Britain, are a temporary exception to this general rule, but already the U.S.A. imports about 40% of her oil, after having been self-sufficient ten years ago, and next year Russia becomes a net importer. Fossil fuels are becoming scarcer and it is time that we stopped talking about conservation of oil supplies, and did something to stop them being used up at breakneck speed, so that they can be conserved for those uses to which oil is best suited—such as lubricants, chemical feedstocks and certain forms of transport.

It is attractive to think that one could easily turn back to the oldest international source of energy, the one on which the Industrial Revoluion was founded, and use coal. We are always told that there are vast reserves of coal all over the world and there are, in fact, quite big reserves of coal in this country. But, the quoted figures must be treated with some suspicion since the 300 years which is often cited would only be true if very thin seams and very deep seams of coal became economic, or even possible, to mine. 100 years of reserves is probably nearer the mark. Therefore, in the future with coal just as with oil, costs will rise and shortages threaten and, just as in the case of oil, coal should be conserved for chemical feedstocks and oil substitutes.

If we are to leave our children and grandchildren some hope of being able to enjoy a technology-based civilisation such as we consider to be our everyday right, we shall have to do something urgently about conserving the world's stocks of oil and coal and base our energy supply on much longer lasting, and on renewable, sources. The so-called alternative sources, of wind, wave and solar power, have a romantic attraction about them which often stops us looking closely into their safety, their economics and their ability to meet our needs. Wave power, at the moment, is very expensive, with a forecast price of 25p-50p per unit as compared with a mean cost of 1.5p for coal, oil or nuclear powered stations. Both wind and wave are erratic and would require to be backed up by large reserves of power stations deriving their energy from some other source, if one was not to run out of power during calm, frosty spells in the middle of winters or during gales when windmills need to be shut down for safety's sake. The fact is that all alternative energy sources together are unlikely at the best estimate to contribute more than 5% of our needs by the year A.D. 2000.

We have therefore to recognise the fact that the one remaining major energy source available to us, suitable for generating large quantities of electricity, is atomic energy. Atomic energy could provide all our needs of

electricity. Atomic energy could allow us to conserve large amounts of oil and coal and enable us to spin out our reserves of these valuable but finite substances for many years.

We now have, in this country, enough uranium which, if used in fast reactors, could last for 300 years without buying or mining more. However, if we were to buy a little more each year for the next twenty years and if we develop our atomic energy industry along carefully planned lines, we would then be largely self-sufficient in electricity for the next 1,000 years. That would give us time to develop atomic fusion to replace atomic fission or to develop methods of extracting uranium from low-grade ores, such as sea water, which would be likely to extend the availability of atomic power for incalculable years ahead.

Simply because nuclear energy powered the atomic bomb people seem to be scared of it. Nevertheless it may be argued that the atomic energy industry is less environmentally hazardous than either coal or oil. We allow our coal-fired electricity stations to pour out radio-active substances into the atmosphere without making any real effort to control them. We allow our oil and coal industries to cripple and kill people at a regular annual rate, without for a moment considering that this is unacceptable. Yet we still consider the atomic energy industry dangerous, even though it readily accepts safety levels which are unattainable in coal mining and oil exploration.

People sometimes fear that the development of the atomic energy industry for peaceful purposes would increase the danger of proliferation of atomic weapons amongst the countries of the world, but this is not necessarily true. Indeed, atomic weapons can be made, and are likely to be made, out of materials manufactured by a centrifuge, rather than produced as a by-product from a peaceful power station. A far greater security danger and threat to world peace is a world shortage of coal or oil. Such a shortage is bound to come and it will come sooner and present a greater threat to world peace if we have done nothing in the meantime to develop alternatives. We are already seeing the super powers manoeuvring for position in the oil rich Persian Gulf and the favourite scenario, of those who play 'war games', for the outbreak of a third world war is based on a fight for available supplies of oil. It is perhaps a curious mercy that the world wide recession is depressing our need for oil at a time when things are so unstable in the Persian Gulf.

Yet, in the long term, only a massive development of sources of energy alternative to oil can diminish the threat to world peace. It is therefore time that we, in this country, stopped romantically hoping that some sort of return to the 'good life' can solve our energy problem. We delude ourselves if we think that a programme of energy conservation alone will meet the increased energy requirement of industry and the spending public as we begin to rise out of the present industrial depression. Of course, energy conservation will remain important, as will the proper use of waste heat; alternative energy sources should be experimented with and developed where promising. Of course, experiments into atomic fusion

should be continued even though it has to be recognised that it has never yet produced any electricity and that no one thinks it will be made to work in this century. But it is above all a matter of absolute importance to this country and to world peace that we start now to develop a sensible and continuing atomic power industry, using the fast reactor system, to make full use of our available uranium supplies.

An energy strategy for this country will allow us to phase out oil from electricity generation so that it can be kept as a raw material and for transport. It would enable us to cut down our dependence on coal as costs rise or as mining gets more difficult and shortages of coal threaten. It would enable us to develop coal for other uses and as a replacement for oil; even though some low-grade coal could always usefully be used in power stations. An energy strategy for this country based on atomic energy should set out to develop the atomic power industry gradually over the next 20 years until it is taking the main strain of electricity generation. For 20 years it will be necessary to build thermal power stations, but after that we should be building fast reactors, both for proper plutonium management and waste control and so as to develop the system which is the one that gives us the real long term future. For the next 20 years, if we are ordering new power stations at the rate of about two per annum, one could be coal fired and one nuclear powered, each year. Of the nuclear reactors which we might order between now and the year 2000, five should be fast reactors and after the year 2000 one new fast reactor should be ordered each year and the ordering of thermal reactors should then be stopped.

If we disregard the present effect of the depression, we can calculate that our needs of electricity can be met by 30 modern power stations with six in reserve. These stations have to be re-equipped or replaced at regular intervals with modern plant as they wear out or become obsolete. To do this it is necessary to build between one and two power stations per year even if demand does not increase at all. A modest growth rate, however, suggests that a figure nearer to two is about right. Over the last five years we have only commissioned about half the required number, so obsolescence is catching up with us. It is also important to remember that it takes about ten years to build a power station of any kind.

It is an illusion to think that we can safely go on delaying a decision. No more information than that already available is likely to come suddenly into our hands. No magical scientific breakthrough in alternative energy technology can really be expected. The North Sea oil has already half disappeared into the soundless void of the depression. Time is no longer on our side and it is a luxury which we cannot afford to continue 'the great atomic debate' much longer.

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[The Rt. Hon. Viscount Thurso of Ulbster, J.P., is Liberal Spokesman on Energy in the House of Lords.]

# CHAD AFTER THE DEBACLE: IS THERE A SOLUTION?

## by S. E. Orobator

IN the transitional government, Malloum and Habre tried to provide a solution to the Chadian crisis by including representatives from four of the FROLINAT movements, and by coming to an agreement with former enemies. One of these was Goukouni Oueddei, an age-long rival of Hissen Habre, who was now brought into the government as the Internal Affairs Minister. Oueddei remained Commander of the People's Armed Forces (FAP), a faction of the FROLINAT Second Army, the control of which he took over from Habre in 1976, but which had since further disintegrated into several resistance groups. Other members of the government included Abubakar Abdelraman and Lol Mohammed Shawa, co-leaders of the Popular Movement for Liberation of Chad (MPLT) known as the FROLINAT Third Army with its operational base among the Western Kanebou population of the Lake Chad region. The interest of the Sara population of the South was represented by the Vice-President General Negy Djogo, but there were only a few Saras in the National army because many deserted or changed sides in favour of the FROLINAT. The fourth FROLINAT movement represented in the government was that of Hissen Habre himself.[1] As we saw earlier, by the agreement *Charte Fondamentale* between Malloum and Habre, the Armed Forces of North Command Council (CCFAN), led by Habre, were to be dissolved and integrated into the Chadian national army; but Habre refused to honour this pledge because he remained suspicious of Malloum's intentions.

There were other sources of friction between President Malloum and Prime Minister Habre. Habre's official appointments were biased in favour of the Northerners. He removed the Southern hardliners from the important State Committee of Defence and Security (CDS) and replaced them by Northerners. He pushed through a law establishing Arabic as Chad's *lingua franca,* second only to French, and in fact employed pressure occasionally on the Chad radio authority for not transmitting news in Arabic before French.[2]

Habre's reform measures soon aroused hostility both within and outside the country. President Malloum feared that Habre's reforms were too pro-North to be in the interest of the country. The Northerners on the other hand complained that the reforms were not far-reaching enough in their favour. The Opposition from the South was championed by Lt. Colonel Kamougue Wadal Abdelkadar (Chief of the Gendarmerie) who threatened to pull out the Sara-populated South of the country, in preference to accepting domination by the North.

Of the external opposition to the Provisional Government and Habre's measures, that of Libya was most obvious and consistent. Colonel Gaddafi

was against the Malloum-Habre government, simply because it was not prepared to recognise Libya's claim to the Aozou strip. Consequently, Libya continued to give support to any of the movements opposed to the Central government. In the circumstances, Libyan allegiance switched from one group to another, in the hope that any of them could cede the territory in question to her, if it happened to win the war.

Thus, it became clear that the Malloum-Habre administration was unable to satisfy the opposition or crush them. Between the two leaders mutual suspicion grew to disturbing proportions. Habre and his supporters resorted to boycotting meetings of the Council of Defence and Security, in protest against Malloum's refusal to grant more privileges to the Muslims and, by the end of 1978, Habre was being seen as the champion of the Muslim north against the Christian South. The divided armies shared the respective positions of their leaders; and on the 12th February 1979, there was a confrontation between the two sides. Habre's forces captured the radio station at N'Djamena, forcing Malloum to take refuge under the cover of the French troops. The defence of the capital against Habre was eventually taken over by Lt-Colonel Kamougue Wadal Abdelkadar, the Commanding Officer of the Gendarmerie, with the close logistic and military support of France. It was the second time the French had intervened to save N'Djamena from the rebel forces.[3]

A cease-fire was arranged on 19th February at the instance of the Sudan, but more fighting soon broke out, with the various factions of FROLINAT consolidating their holdings all over the country. Habre's forces were in control of most parts of the north of the capital while the national army, now led by Lt-Colonel Kamougue Wadal Abdel Kadar, held the southern part of the capital and the south of the country. With the out-break of hostilities between the President and his Prime Minister, supported by their armies, the Malloum drive and search for national reconciliation came to a halt.

By the beginning of 1979, Chad could be described as a mere 'geographical expression', overwhelmed by an inferno of domestic violence. The provinces were rife with mammoth disorder, and the capital gripped by a nightmare of violence. Life and property were no longer safe anywhere in the country, as the various contestants for power employed whatever means were at their disposal in the bid to achieve it. Troops from the several FROLINAT units were disorderly and many cases of looting and similar offences were reported.

An attempt at achieving peace was eventually made by the Nigerian Government.[4] A peace conference was convened at Kano under the chairmanship of Brigadier Shehu Musa Yar'Adua, the Chief of Staff of the Nigerian Army, and the main contestants for power, Malloum, Habre and Oueddei were present. Also in attendance was Abubakar Abdelraman, a co-leader of the MPLT, who seemed to be enjoying the support of Lagos. Representatives of other movements, headed by Dr. Abba Siddick and Ahmat Acyl, were present on that occasion. The agreement, signed on the 16th of March 1979, provided for the removal of troops from the

capital. The government was to step down and be replaced by a transitional government of national unity. All prisoners of war and hostages taken were to be set free. The agreement was witnessed and guaranteed by Chad's neighbours: Nigeria, Sudan, Niger, Cameroon and Libya.

In accordance with the requirement of the peace agreement, President Malloum and his Prime Minister resigned on the 23rd of March 1979, and a new transitional government was set up with Goukouni Oueddei as the leader. Known as the Provisional State Council, the new government was made up of eight members drawn from all the parties to the agreement. Oueddei's Chairmanship marked the first time the leader of FROLINAT was in control of the Government of Chad. Felix Malloum went into exile in Lagos.

But the new government was still in the making when fresh outbursts of mass violence and disorder emerged. The Provisional Council was confronted by enemies from within and without. The Peoples' Armed Forces (FAP, a faction of the former FROLINAT Second Army and led by Goukouni Oueddei) remained suspicious of Hissen Habre's faction —the Armed Forces of North Command Council (CCFAN). The leaders of both wings remained at loggerheads. Further opposition to the Government came from Dr. Siddick's FROLINAT wing, based in Algiers since 1977, and Ahmat Acyl's Vulcan Force. Both movements operated in the region of Amtiman in East Chad with the support of Libya which, although she had guaranteed the Kano agreement, was still against the Provisional Council for failing to concede the Aozou strip to her. It was in the midst of the new violence that the second Kano conference was held, but nothing useful was achieved.

The failure of the conference appeared to have encouraged further violence. Factions of the FROLINAT clashed with one another and ethnic hostilities became widespread. On the 29th April 1979, a co-leader of the MPLT, Lol Mohammed Shawa, seized the opportunity provided by the state of confusion to announce a new Council of Ministers.[5] The new Council contained representatives from most of the provinces and featured a Muslim majority. Goukouni Oueddei became the Interior Minister while Hissen Habre was put in charge of national defence. Being in the same government did not end the Oueddei-Habre quarrel and rivalry. Instead, it became intensified. Moreover, the northern-dominated government was unacceptable to the Southern leaders whose interest was represented by Lt-Col. Kamougue Wadal Abdel Kadar. Colonel Abdel Kadar's opposition to the new government was rooted also in the fact that he had been excluded from the rather prominent role he had played in the Provisional State Council under the Chairmanship of Goukouni Oueddei. He broke links with the national army, solicited and secured the support of Libya and, with his followers, threatened to pull out Southern Chad from the rest of the country. To achieve his aim he established a movement—the United Southern Front—as a rallying point of southerners against the North.

The third reconciliation conference organised by Nigeria was held in

Lagos in May, 1979. All attempts to settle the differences between the warring factions proved unsuccessful as Libya continued to supply arms to Ahmat Acyl's Vulcan Force and Kamougue Abdel Kadar's United Southern Front, both arch enemies of the Central government. As already indicated, the role of Libya in the Chadian problem has been most dubious but consistent. It was dubious in that Colonel Gaddafi was prepared only to offer assistance to any group or movement which promised to accept his claim to the mineral-rich Aozou strip. Libya's support of the secessionist movement, led by Abdel Kadar, was calculated to embarrass N'Djamena and to force negotiation on the strip in question. It was consistent in that Libya's aim in meddling in the Chadian affair has been, and remains, guarded by her desire to acquire the Aozou strip. Although Colonel Gaddafi had shifted his support from one FROLINAT movement to another and even, at times, in favour of the central government, his aim was always remained the same.

On the other hand, the reasons for Nigeria's apparent support for Abubakar Abdelraman, a co-leader of the MPLT known formerly as the Third Army, are not entirely clear. Unlike Libya, Nigeria has no territorial or other ambitions in Chad. Abdelraman is probably favoured by Nigeria because of historical or ethnic connections, having come from the Kanem populated area of Chad who are kith and kin of the Kanaris of North Eastern Nigeria. It was also possible that Abdelraman was the first of the contestants for power in Chad to make contact with Lagos, thereby securing the goodwill and understanding of the Nigerian leaders. The important thing, however, was that Nigeria continued to support the MPLT, led by Abdelraman, in all ways possible, thus further complicating the Chadian crisis simultaneously with her attempts to bring peace to that country.

The failure of the Lagos Conference to achieve the much-needed peace for Chad appeared to have forced Nigeria to adopt a harder line with the hope of realising the desired goal. Nigeria imposed an oil embargo on the already desperately poor country; an action which had disastrous effects upon the new transitional government. This, coupled with the continued Libyan hostility from the North and the secessionist threat led by Kamougue Wadal Abdel Kadar in the South, resulted in the collapse of the Council of Ministers formed in April, 1979 by the apparently unknown and unpopular Lol Mohammed Shawa, a leader of the MPLT.

The fall of the April government brought Goukouni Oueddei once again into the forefront of power in Chad, this time as President. He became President in August 1979, after another Lagos peace conference on the 21st of that month. In forming his government, Oueddei made yet another effort at national reconciliation by incorporating in it the different faces of FROLINAT. The Vice-Presidency was offered to and accepted by Lt-Col. Kamougue Wadal Abdel Kadar, the Southern secessionist leader, apparently in a bid to stem the secessionist urge. The rest of the Oueddei administration, known as the 'Transitional Government of National Unity', comprised the following bodies: the People's Armed

Forces (FAP) under President Goukouni Oueddei himself; and the Northern Armed Forces (FAN) known formerly (until August, 1979) as the Armed Forces of North Command Council (CCFAN), led by the Defence Minister, Hissen Habre. The Government also contained representatives of the Movement For the Liberation of Chad (MPLT), co-commanded by Abubakar Abdelraman and Lol Mohammed Shawa. Some supporters of ex-President Malloum were also brought into the administration.

The Oueddei ministry, like those before it, was unfortunately soon confronted by various problems, paramount amongst which was that of unity. First, there was the continuing mutual mistrust and suspicion between Oueddei and his age-long arch rival for power, Hissen Habre, the Defence Minister. Secondly, a section of the United Front of the South led by Kamougue Wadel Abdel Kadar, now Vice-President, remained opposed to the Government, apparently in protest against their leader's acceptance of the Vice-President.[8] On the other hand, the Vice-President himself continued to threaten to pull out the cotton-rich South and disorganise the Government, if the President and his Defence Minister were unable to settle their differences amicably. Thirdly, the FROLINAT faction of Dr. Siddick (in exile in Algiers since 1977) remained in opposition to the new government and was in control of parts of the Amtiman region in East Chad. Also opposed to the continued rift between Oueddei and Habre and to the attitude of the latter were Ahmat Acyl, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and leader of the Vulcan Force, and Mohammed Said, the Minister of the Interior. The Vulcan Force eventually merged with the Vice-President's United Front of the South to form the Common Action Front (FAC), led by both the Vice-President and the Foreign Minister. The FAC is opposed to FAN, led by the Defence Minister Hissen Habre, and for that it receives the backing of Libya against Habre, who remains uncompromising on the Aozou strip question. The FAP also has the blessing of Colonel Gaddafi, for similar reasons; while FAN gets support from France, Egypt and the Sudan.

The picture of domestic discord in Chad in the year 1980 was as follows: the principal opposition groups were FAP, led by President Oueddei, and FAN, led by Defence Minister Habre. The FAC, co-sponsored by the Vice-President Kamougue Abdel Kadar and the Foreign Minister Ahmat Acyl, was supporting the President against the Defence Minister, but between FAP and FAC there were factions opposed to the President or the Vice-President. Some elements within FAP were opposed to the appointment of Kamougue Abdel Kadar as Vice-President while, within FAC, the hardliners blamed Abdel Kadar for accepting the Vice-Presidency in a Northern dominated government. They preferred to continue their drive towards the secession of the South.

Besides these major contestants for power within Chad, there were several groups fighting for either a responsible position within the country or secession from it. On the whole, there were eleven hostile groups as at May 1980. The proliferation of hostile armed groups led frequently to

armed clashes and violations of ceasefires; as happened on the 20th March 1980, with one group blaming the other for starting the conflict. The situation was arrested eventually by the mediation of the Togolese President, Gnassigbe Syadema, (6th April) and the OAU Secretary-General, Edem Kodjo, (9th April) when they intervened personally to end the conflict. But fresh fighting broke out within 36 hours of the ceasefire arranged by the mediators and since then the war has been fought with increasing ferocity and bitterness.

The extent of ill-will amongst the contestants for power was sufficiently demonstrated by their attitude to the conflict and regard for one another. For instance, in a press conference on the 5th of April 1980, President Oueddei described Defence Minister Habre as 'a handicap to national reconciliation', adding that it was 'necessary' for the fighting to establish 'a victor able to dominate the country.'[7] And indeed, the fighting in Chad is aimed at establishing 'a victor' capable of holding the strife-torn country together, and the principal contestants for this position are the President himself and his powerful Defence Minister, Hissen Habre. Thus, the main target and political enemy of the President is now his Defence Minister. The supporters of the former seemed determined to fight on, with or without presidential consent, until victory was achieved; as indicated by an officer in Oueddei's army when he said: 'Even if the President (Goukouni Oueddei) orders his men to cease fire, they will continue fighting until Hissen Habre is eliminated.'

The elimination of the Defence Minister is certainly going to be difficult to achieve for, although most other groups are against him and his movement FAN, he is known to be in effective control of large parts of Northern Chad and sections of N'Djamena. He is still quite popular amongst Chadians as probably the only nationalist leader most consistently opposed to Libyan occupation of the mineral rich Aozou strip. Even if Hissen Habre is successfully 'eliminated', the solution to the Chadian problem would still be far in the future, for his goals could be pursued by his lieutenants with equal if not with more uncompromising determination.

Again, even if the complete 'elimination' of Habre and his supporters were possible, peace would still elude Chad for some time. President Oueddei is confronted also by opposition from FAC, the movement led by the Vice-President and the Foreign Minister who at the moment are equally opposed to the Defence Minister. At present there seems to be a fragile alliance between the President, the Vice-President, the Foreign Minister and the Interior Minister against the common enemy, the Defence Minister. But there are already signs of cracks within the alliance. President Oueddei had accused the leaders of FAC of having broken the April ceasefire, describing them as people of 'egotism, personal ambition and authors of present troubles.' With equal bitterness and disappointment, the President added: 'When a Minister rebels against the Head of State and thus against the rest of the Government, every language in the world calls it a *coup d'état.*'

It is obvious therefore that President Oueddei has a great deal to contend with. Defeating Hissen Habre and abolishing his FAN, even though virtually impossible, are not enough. There are and there will be numerous obstacles, within and without, on the way to peace in Chad.

These numerous obstacles had attracted the attention of personalities, inside and outside Africa, towards finding possible solutions. A number of African heads of states, notably Gaddafi (Libya), Omar Bongo (Gabon), Marien Nguabi (Congo) and Jafaar Numeiri (Sudan), at the initial stages made efforts to find peace for Chad. Their failure resulted in the attempts made by Nigeria's General Obasanjo and, recently, in the unsuccessful efforts made by President Eyadema of Togo and the current OAU Secretary-General, Edem Kodjo.

The Chadian crisis was one of the most salient issues debated at the July 1980 OAU meeting in the Sierra Leone capital. Suggestions were made for the deployment of troops of member states to act as a peace-keeping force in that country. But, of the estimated amount of about 6 million dollars required for the military and logistic support of such an operation, only 300,000 dollars had been realised by donations after two days of deliberations on the subject.[10] The disappointment accruing from such a situation was sufficiently exhibited by the Organisation's Secretary-General himself when he observed: 'Chad is dying before our own eyes'.[11] The possible solution now being contemplated by the OAU leaders is the use of the United Nations troops in Chad.

But the question remains—how effective will the UN forces be in Chad? Admittedly, in its peace-keeping effort, the UN had performed apparently well in places like Cyprus and the Middle East, but these are not sufficient indication that it would be successful in Chad, given the mandate under which it works. Unlike Cyprus and the Middle East, where the hostile factions or groups have lines of demarcation between one another, thereby creating a buffer zone for use by the UN troops, the Chadian warring factions intermingle in the provinces, and even in the capital, making the positioning of foreign troops difficult without the use of force.

Nevertheless, the UNO remains the most appropriate body, in terms of the ability to finance the project and to police Chad. The OAU is less likely to be able to carry out the assignment effectively because of the financial constraints. The force has to be large, well equipped and provided adequately with the other logistic support necessary for high-level performance. Neither the OAU nor any African state could fulfil these conditions effectively, as was demonstrated by the quick pull-out of the 550 Congolese peace-keeping troops, following the death of one of them by a stray bullet. Even before this, there had been agitation for their return home because of the cost of troop and equipment maintenance. The incidence of death by a random shot only provided the basis for the pull-out of the troops. Like the Nigerian forces sent in before them, the Congolese troops now realise that the solutions to the problems in Chad are beyond the reach of one African state. The assignment should have fallen, therefore, on the OAU, but for the fact that this Organisation

as we have seen lacks finance, which is a necessary basis for the up-keep of peace-keeping troops.

Having acknowledged the great complexity of the problem, the United Nations still appear the most favourably equipped to provide a solution. The UN should endeavour to organise a referendum to determine whether or not the majority of the people really desire peace as alternative to permanent warfare, as well as to establish what type of government is preferred. Having helped in establishing a popularly elected government, the UN should play a front-line role in aiding Chad, financially and otherwise, to recover from the disastrous effects of many years of war. And, lastly, the United Nations should offer effective all-round backing to any legitimately elected government, in order to insulate it from undue and unwarranted armed opposition from within and without. In this connection, the UN would need to intervene in the Libya-Chad dispute over the Aozou strip, and probably provide troops to police the area until the disagreement was resolved. Without a Libyan-Chadian accord, peace would still elude Northern Chad, even after the settlement of the domestic crisis. If it is true that, as rightly observed by the OAU Secretary-General, 'Chad is dying,' only the rest of the world can save her from this debacle.

For already it is clear that the prospect of Libya and Chad becoming allies after the recent negotiations and cease-fire is causing neighbouring states considerable anxiety. Quite apart from misgivings over Libya's avowed intention to assist with the 're-organisation' of Chad's army, is the fear of Soviet ascendancy in such sensitive areas as the mouth of the Nile.

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1. *Africa*, No. 105, May 1980, pp. 46-47.
2. *Africa Confidential*, Vol. 20, No. 3, January 31, 1979, p. 6.
3. *Africa South of the Sahara*, Op. Cit., p. 278.
4. Peace Conferences were also organised at different times by other neighbouring countries, for example, Libya, where a conference held in Tripoli in July 1978 was attended by President Malloum, and Goukouni Oueddei and by observers from Libya, Sudan and Niger. Congo Brazzaville, Gabon and Sudan also tried at various times, without success.
5. *Africa South of the Sahara*, Op. Cit., p. 279.
6. *Africa Confidential*, Vol. 20, No. 17, August 22, 1979, p. 5.
7. *Africa*, No. 105, May 1980, p. 46.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*
10. BBC World Service News desk, 4.00 hours GMT; July 2, 1980.
11. BBC News of the African World; 5.00 hours GMT; *Ibid.*

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['Chadian Crisis—the Search for Solution' was published in the January 1981 (Volume 238 No. 1380) of *Contemporary Review*.]

# THE LIFETIME OF A LORD

## by Paul Rose

I SHALL always remember Michael Stewart (now Lord Stewart) as a slightly shy, kindly and soft spoken man. He was unpretentious but a little difficult to get to know because of his diffidence. He was never malicious and even when I differed with him strongly over Vietnam or Nigeria it never occurred to me to question his integrity. At the despatch box he may not have been colourful or charismatic but he was formidable in the forthrightness of his speech, his obvious sincerity and his unwillingness to play to the gallery.

I thought his book* would be yet another boring monologue of self justification or side-swipes at political contemporaries. In fact, the simple prose and lack of pomposity combined with a charitable approach to others makes this a refreshing autobiography which can be assimilated with ease. Michael Stewart was in the best traditions of nonconformist Christian Socialism. No doubt today's sloganisers would dub him reactionary or revisionist. The fact is that he represents the mainstream of those who arrived at their conclusions in the thirties from intellectual conviction and genuine compassion rather than because of their own horrific experiences.

What intrigues me is how many Labour leaders knew one another at an early age long before attaining office. They had the advantage of education and Michael Stewart is an unashamed classicist who retained something of the benevolent schoolmaster about him when speaking as foreign minister, though his earlier claim to success was in Education. His period at the Department of Economic Affairs does not stand out and his retiring personality perhaps accounts for the fact that it is difficult to remember him as Number Two in the Labour Cabinet. It is equally difficult to understand why he was not given office in 1974 when he must still have had much to offer.

I was intrigued that it was a book on the Irish question that made him first consider that his country could do no wrong, since I remember a parallel experience when studying history at the equivalent age a generation later. In spite of moderate circumstances Michael Stewart had the classic background of a mother with intellectual pretensions and an education at Christ's Hospital before entering Oxford on an Open Scholarship. His great confession which may send militants into anger and frustration is that he is a Tawnian relating Christianity to Socialism.

Mixing with men like John Parker, Professor G. D. H. Cole, Hugh Gaitskell, Dingle Foot, Richard Acland, Tom Driberg and George Woodcock, he must have had a stimulating introduction to the theories of the day although it was to be the working class area of Lewisham and later Fulham that were to adopt this product of the intellectual ferment of the thirties. Labour Parties were curiously deferential and yet the anti-intellectualism which characterises much current rhetoric is alien to that tradition and would amaze continental leftists. The French left wears

a Sartre-like badge of honour and regards theory in a way that is increasingly unknown to the pragmatic proletariat of Blackpool Conferences. The shrinking W.E.A., for whom Michael Stewart lectured, testifies to a better state educated membership today but also to a disregard for the higher aspirations of the socialists of yesteryear.

Michael Stewart was no pacifist in the face of Fascism and it may be the 1935 experience, when many in the Labour Party still held such convictions, that made him so stubborn over Vietnam and fearful of appearing to appease the Soviet Union when he became Foreign Secretary.

Younger socialists may be unaware of his association with 'Comrade Alderman Professor Laski' and his fund-raising for Spain. Michael Stewart shows a sense of humour of a subtle kind which again belies the public image he projected at the Despatch Box.

I was interested in his view that army education was not the reason for Labour's landslide victory in 1945 but that it was based on their revulsion at the thirties and the fact that they had been landed in a war and were resolved to make a change. I wonder if he underestimates the pre-war ferment of ideas in which he himself played his part. A third factor he considered was the part Labour had played in the war-time coalition.

Michael Stewart is no denigrator of the Attlee administration in which he served as a Whip before going to the War Office. He is overtly over-kind to civil servants and disagrees with Dick Crossman that decisions are taken secretly by small groups. There, I take issue with him, just as I find him equally naive about the Greek Communists, as if he did not realise that they were betrayed by Stalin in the way we abandoned Czechoslovakia because of the spheres of influence carved out by the super powers.

Thus his point about the West not promoting insurrection in Communist countries is irrelevant since no Communist Party in the West was encouraged to rise and Stalinists stamped firmly on anyone who suggested they should, as in France. The last thing the Soviets wanted was independent and not exported revolution, as the Yugoslav experience ought to have shown. Indeed, Vietnam might well have been the Yugoslavia of the Orient if left to its own devices by the Americans.

The social advances of Jim Griffith's National Insurance and Nye Bevan's Health Acts are described and I rather liked the quotation that 'Field Marshal Montgomery was heard to declare that Nye's handling of the doctors deserved the attention of all students of strategy'. Similarly the raising of the school leaving age under Ellen Wilkinson is not overlooked by a man who never ceased to be concerned about education. Cripps' ability, combined with his ineptitude in putting up food prices on the eve of the L.C.C. election, conjured up the image of a similarly gifted politician, Dick Crossman, who made a similar gaff—no doubt because of his total involvement with Parliamentary politics and departmental responsibility. Michael Stewart, by contrast, was very conscious of the need to keep close to the grass roots even if he is unconsciously somewhat paternalistic in his approach.

He is far from naive in his exposure of the lengths to which some Tories would go to sabotage a Labour Government, even to the extent of wasting fuel and boycotting national savings when national recovery was Labour's post-war priority.

My main criticism of Michael Stewart's approach is a superficiality derived from trying to cover so much ground in simple prose. 'The Indian sub-continent had to be partitioned' he asserts, 'but we are not told why and the same lack of argument characterises many assumptions based on hindsight or conventional wisdom. Perhaps he recognised lack of interest in foreign affairs on the part of so many Labour members. This is no pretext for a simple statement that 'the U.N. overplayed its hand and . . . tried to conquer the North (Korea)'. Firstly the force was U.N. in name only and secondly it refuses to admit that the other super-power could be as imperialist as the Soviet Union in certain areas.

Nevertheless, he was a tolerant mainstream man who regretted the polarisation of the Party and refused to regard the Bevanites as beyond the pale, a position which was courageous since it leads to hostility from both wings. His 'keep calm' group could have more relevance today as Bennites and the 'gang of three' tear the Labour Party apart in constitutional wrangles and create what Stewart called 'the paralysis of constructive thought inside the Party' during the Bevanite split. Curiously, Bevan would be a moderate in today's atmosphere and the lack of such a man, other than perhaps Michael Foot, his biographer, is a tragedy for the Labour Party as it ponders on the leadership.

In opposition Stewart was one of the early advocates of comprehensive education and was a popular choice at the Ministry of Education on Labour's accession to power. However, it is the foreign office that is the culmination and high point of his career. His approach is level-headed and most decisions are wise but conventional wisdom is taken for granted. It is easy to state that 'the Cabinet had already decided that we must divest ourselves of responsibilities East of Suez'. The fifty odd M.P.s who voted for this only a year earlier had been threatened with losing our 'dog licences' by Harold Wilson.

On taking office, Stewart recognised the narrow class stratum from which the Foreign Office is recruited but I found remarkable complacency when I raised this at question time. His belief that Indonesia is no longer aggressive is hardly tenable, given West Irian, South Molucca and East Timor, even if confrontation has ceased. That he found Vietnam agonising is not surprising but a condemnation of certain American actions would not have been one-sided in the context of general policies. With benefit of hindsight his position on Vietnam must be seen to be untenable, a fact he is unable to acknowledge because of his loyalty to friends, an endearing facet of his personality that emerges in many spheres.

He was no cold-war warrior as his recognition of East-Germany showed. It was apparent to him that the E.E.C. was not a counterpoise to the Commonwealth but the trading agreements between E.E.C. and the Commonwealth could make staying out a factor removing us further from the Commonwealth. He is equally perceptive about proportional

representation, citing the Netherlands where different Government changes in a multi-party system were comparable to British Cabinet reshuffles.

Foreign affairs aside, Michael Stewart has some trenchant things to say on economic affairs in an age when no one can expect to stay in one industry all his life. His views on this are worth considering:—

> If the distribution of income is left solely to bargaining the result will be a rate of inflation and a degree of injustice which will be unacceptable.

He recognised that stronger Unions support a free for all but that a policy could only succeed in the context of general policies leading to social justice.

Curiously, Michael Stewart had a second bite of the cherry between 1968-70 when he took over the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. He was forthright in his sympathy with Israel and again his simple analysis is worth quoting:—

> On lesser but important issues, Israel put herself in the wrong: on the great issue of her statehood and security she was overwhelmingly in the right.

And he justifies Resolution 242 which was open to interpretation and therefore acceptable and useful as a basis for negotiation.

He uncompromisingly defends Nato, citing the support of the Italian Communist Party. Similarly he emphasises the role of E.E.C. in the transformation of Greece, Spain and Portugal into the democratic orbit.

The detailed defence of Biafran policy makes me wonder how convinced Michael Stewart was himself. He makes the cardinal error of forgetting that African boundaries were drawn by Europeans, but dismemberment of African States was his real fear. His analogy with the U.S. Civil War is therefore not tenable and I found the suggestion that not to supply arms to Gowan would make us supporters of the other side, namely Biafra, infuriating. Only twenty M.Ps. from Tory Ian Fraser to left-winger Frank Allaun, moderate Michael Barnes and Jo Grimond, former Liberal Leader, stood out as 'Pro Biafran'. As one of them I must confess that I was angered at George Thompson's apologies. Reading Michael Stewart I begin to see the rationale for their view but I wonder how much they were fed by Civil Servants concerned with oil supplies.

That was the high-water of my dissatisfaction with Michael Stewart. In retrospect he was a straight-forward Minister with skills that one appreciates more as time passes. To find modesty, honesty and compassion compatible with success alleviates my general cynicism reinforced by a book such as Kauffman's *How to Become a Minister.*

I would recommend Michael Stewart's story to anyone interested in the motivation of those who brought Labour from the wilderness of the thirties into the party of power in eleven of the fifteen years after 1964 and an assessment of their achievement. It is not a Crossman or Castle revelation of extreme detail and it may over simplify but it has the merit of being readable and refreshing.

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**Life and Labour,* Michael Stewart. Sidgwick & Jackson, £10.

# SCOTLAND'S GREAT BRITON

## by J. H. B. Peel

SIR Walter Scott's old home, Abbotsford, is partly a grandiloquent gesture and partly a medieval daydream. Even while it was being built, steam engines were speeding the Industrial Revolution. Nevertheless, Scott's vision has prevailed. Maurice Lindsay, himself a Lowland poet, said recently that the Waverley novels 'resulted in the spread of European interest in Scotland, and gave back to us at least a measure of our self-respect'. Yet Scott himself said to R. S. Surtees: 'England made me what I am.' How are we to interpret that admission, uttered by a man who not only lived for Scotland but also made Scotland live?

By selecting the evidence it is possible to depict Scott as a sycophantic Anglophile who, like the 19th-century Russian nobility, regarded their own nation as uncouth. But the total evidence proves that Scott was in every sense a Great Briton who regarded Scotland as necessarily and *sui generis* a part of the United Kingdom. Were he alive today he would probably be a European, for his patriotism was so sanely based that it neither took nor gave too much. At a time when aggressive nationalism is rampant from Eire to Iran, Scott's chivalry shines like a good deed in a haughty world, asserting that national arrogance is an immature and self-centred excess, blind to the defects of its own country and also to the merits of other countries. When Scott mourned his own nation's lack of a great leader, he stated that the nation was neither Scotland nor England; it was Britain. In short, his love of England was a by-product of his love of Scotland. Without the one, the other would have been less than it was.

Scott came early to England. In fact, he was only four years old when an aunt and uncle took him to Bath, hoping that the waters and the doctors would cure his lameness. Although the hope was unfulfilled, the visit had a lasting and a liberating effect on the patient. Unlike his Calvinist home in Edinburgh, Bath was gracious, cosmopolitan, urbane, aristocratic. There, during a later visit, he first saw a Shakespearean play, *As You Like It*. Nearly twenty years afterwards he still remembered his wish 'that the music would sound again, and the magic curtain once more arise and the enchanting dream recommence.'

Scott visited London fourteen times—quite a feat in those days of slow coaches on bad roads—and in England he made the friends who widened and sharpened his genius. At Rokeby he met Morritt, the Greek scholar; at Oxford he talked with Heber at High Table; in Wiltshire he stayed with Lady Abercorn; in Albermarle Street he met Lord Byron. He dined at Holland House, and in 1826 at Windsor Castle: 'Commanded down to pass a day at Windsor. The King made me sit beside him and talk a great deal—too much perhaps—for he has the art of raising one's spirits.'

Scott's love of England was not confined to high society. He ranged far beyond London and Oxford and Bath, mingling as easily with English

peasants and squireens as with Scottish tradesmen and clergy. For example, it so happens that I live in a remote North Devon parish on the edge of Exmoor, not far from a secluded farm, known variously as Liddicot and Lidcote. This farm lies more than forty miles from the nearest main line railway station, and several miles from the nearest public transport. In Scott's day the whole of Exmoor was *ultima thule,* yet he explored the region and in it he found the house which appears in Chapter 22 of *Kenilworth*:

> The ancient seat of Lidcote Hall . . . adjoined the wild and extensive forest of Exmoor, plentifully stocked with game, in which some ancient rights belonging to the Rosbart family entitled Sir Hugh to pursue his favourite amusement of the chase.

Whether Amy Rosbart's family ever did occupy Lidcote Hall is irrelevant; what matters is Scott's knowledge of the English countryside, and his desire to write about it.

The English border ballad, *Chevy Chase,* is a biased account of the skirmish, giving most of the glory to England. How different is the chivalry of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*:

> Up, billmen, to the walls and cry
> Dacre for England, win or die.

How truly international is the English earl's suggestion that, instead of slaughtering each other, the opposing forces should sit down to talk:

> They met and sate them mingled down,
> Without a threat, without a frown,
> As brothers meet on foreign land;
> The hands, the spear that lately grasp'd,
> Still in the mailed gauntlet clasp'd,
> Were interchanged in greeting dear . . .

But it is *Marmion* that most eloquently speaks for both sides, even as the memorial at Flodden Field speaks for them with a brief dedication *To the brave of both nations.* The Scottish King, you remember, has treacherously invaded England despite a treaty of peace; and he has chosen to do so while Henry VIII is in France. Hurrying north, the English army routs the invaders. Without ever under-stating the Scottish heroism at Flodden (the Scottish King and his bodyguard fell, every man, defending the Standard), the poem nevertheless catches the very timbre of Lord Marmion's warning to the Scottish King, almost Churchillian in its resolve to resist the invaders, county by county, mile by mile, step by step—on the beaches, in the mountains, over the plains:

> But Nottingham has archers good,
> And Yorkshire men are stout of mood;
> Northumbrian prickers wild and rude.
> On Derby hills the paths are steep;
> In Ouse and Tyne the fords are deep;
> And many a banner will be torn,
> And many a knight to earth be borne,
> And many a sheaf of arrows spent
> Ere Scotland's King shall cross the Trent.

Not surprisingly, *The Edinburgh Review* complained that the poem

'neglected the Scottish feelings and Scottish character'. There is some truth in the complaint; yet the fault, if indeed it is a fault, seems as it were a good one. Old-fashioned people would call it 'sportsmanship.' Scott must have been influenced by the fact that all but one of the poem's cantos were written in England, either at George Ellis's house in Windsor, or at Stewart Rose's house in Hampshire, or in London, where Scott was working on his edition of Dryden's manuscripts in the British Museum. However, Scott did not hesitate to create English characters who were either contemptible or foolish. In *The Monastery*, for example, Sir Piercie Shafton is shown as a type of silly ass who convolutes the English language. Even there, though, Scott holds the balance: 'Sir Piercie then replying, without trope or figure in that plain English which nobody could speak better when he had a mind . . .' It is significant that in *Ivanhoe* and *Kenilworth* the characters are never so convincing as when Scott sets the two nations alongside, each illuminating the other.

His own noblesse makes Englishmen feel ashamed of Dr. Johnson, who said that Scotland is merely an inferior version of England. It makes them ashamed, too, of Charles Lamb, that endearing creature, who confessed: 'I have been trying all my life to like Scotchmen, and am obliged to desist from the experiment.' If England had followed Sir Walter's example—treating Scotland civilly and with due respect for its ancient culture—centuries of bitterness could have been avoided. To make the point once again, Scott's love of England flourished alongside a love of Scotland, so passionate that neither Burns nor McDiarmid ever out-sang it:

> Land of brown heath and shaggy wood,
> Land of the mountain and the flood,
> Land of my sires!

But whereas Burns and McDiarmid wore Caledonian blinkers, Scott expected every man to love his own country:

> Breathes there a man, with soul so dead,
> Who never to himself hath said,
> This is my own, my native land!

But Scott was neither a politician nor a propagandist. First and last he was an artist; and although many of his novels may prove too cumbersome to span the centuries, the best of his lyrics have already achieved the brief grasp on Time which men call immortality:

> Proud Maisie is in the wood,
> Walking so early;
> Sweet Robin sits on the bush,
> Singing so rarely.

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A detailed account of Scott and Abbotsford will be found in J. H. B. Peel's latest book, *People and Places* (Hale).

# QUARTERLY RECORD REVIEW

## by David Fingleton

VERDI. *Rigoletto.* Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra/Giulini. (3 Records) DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2740 225.

VERDI. *Aida.* Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra/Von Karajan. (3 Records) EMI SLS 5205.

VERDI. *La Traviata.* San Carlos, Lisbon Orchestra/Ghione. (2 Records) EMI RLS 757.

JANACEK. *From the House of the Dead.* Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra/ Mackerras. (2 Records) DECCA D224D 2.

MONTEVERDI. *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria.* London Philharmonic Orchestra/ Leppard. (3 Records) CBS 79332.

MAHLER. Symphony No. 3. London Philharmonic Orchestra/Tennstedt. (2 Records). EMI SLS 5195.

SHOSTAKOVICH. Symphony No. 5. New York Philharmonic Orchestra/Bernstein. CBS 35854.

SHOSTAKOVICH. Symphony No. 7/Age of Gold Suite. London Philharmonic Orchestra/Haitink. (2 Records) DECCA D213D 2.

TCHAIKOVSKY. *The Sleeping Beauty.* BBC Symphony Orchestra/Rozhdestvensky. (3 Records). BBC ARTIUM BBC 3001.

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DESPITE the current recession which has hit the recording industry as hard as any, and which unquestionably led to a markedly reduced number of new issues during 1980, there has happily been no drop in the very high standard of performances and recordings. Indeed, with the Digital recording technique now firmly established and being used by an ever increasing number of companies, the sheer quality of recorded sound is now unprecedented, and even the conventional 'analogue' recordings seem to enjoy a degree of care and attention in their making that was not always found hitherto. The nine recordings discussed here all appeared in the second half of last year, and all but one, the historic 'live' recording in Lisbon in March 1958 of the legendary Maria Callas singing the title role in *La Traviata,* offer an often breathtaking recorded sound. Moreover all nine, and here I unhesitatingly include *La Traviata,* are performances of the highest standards. Any one of these issues will become a cherished item in the discerning music lover's record collection.

Verdi has been particularly well served by the record companies in the past few months, and pride of place undoubtedly goes to Deutsche Grammophon's new issue of *Rigoletto.* To have lured the great conductor Carlo Maria Giulini back into the operatic recording studio which he had abandoned for a decade was a remarkable feat in itself; having done so, to have achieved a recorded performance of such dramatic veracity, unparalleled conviction, and sheer quality truly deserves our gratitude. It is instantly apparent that Giulini's retirement from the opera house has blunted neither his appetite nor his gift for the medium. His version of *Rigoletto* is not only the finest currently available on record, but must indeed be

one of the most satisfying performances of any Verdi opera ever recorded. Giulini clearly cherishes the score, and thus plays precisely what Verdi wrote, eschewing subsequently all too common cuts and vocal adornments. He and DG hand-picked the cast which is of star quality from top to bottom: not merely Piero Cappuccilli in the title role, with Ileana Cotrubas as Gilda and Placido Domingo as the Duke, but Nicolai Ghiaurov as Sparafucile, the fine Wagnerian bass Kurt Moll as Monterone —a small but crucial role—and the admirable Hanna Schwarz (a memorable Waltraute in Covent Garden's recent 'Ring') in the tiny role of Giovanna. Only the Soviet mezzo Elena Obraztsova is less than ideal as Maddalena: her voice has dramatic power in abundance, but sadly little seductiveness, which is essential to the part.

The Vienna Philharmonic respond to Giulini with fervent finesse and the performance grips from start to finish. The three principals, though they sing magnificently, avoid mere vocal display and identify totally with their roles. Never have I heard the second act generate more emotional power: *Parmi veder le lagrime, Corteggiani, vil razza dannata, Tutte le feste,* and finally that great duet *Si, vendetta* have a searing intensity and sensitivity that stamp themselves indelibly on the memory. Great performances by Domingo, Cappuccilli, and especially by Cotrubas, but the greatest of all is Maestro Giulini—the true magnificence of this recording is his achievement.

Another great operatic conductor, when on best form, is Herbert von Karajan, and fortunately EMI's new recording of *Aida* catches him at his peak. It was made in Vienna's Musikverein in May 1979, shortly before Karajan's production of the opera, with almost the same cast, opened at that summer's Salzburg Festival. Again the orchestra is the Vienna Philharmonic, again on top form, and EMI, using conventional 'analogue' techniques, have produced a first class recording, with the great Triumphal Scene having colossal impact. Be warned though: Karajan's dynamic range is enormous—you will need opera-loving or, at least, tolerant neighbours! Once again the opera is cast at top strength throughout. Mirella Freni makes a moving Aida, Jose Carreras, though light, an ardent Radames, Cappuccilli is superb as Amonasro, and Jose Van Dam an impressive King of Egypt. But the outstanding performance comes from the Greek mezzo Agnes Baltsa whose Amneris is a superbly conceived, as well as a magnificently executed interpretation.

That is what Maria Callas as Violetta in *La Traviata* is all about. She never recorded the role in the studio after an early version for Cetra—there were contractual difficulties—but fortunately for us EMI have unearthed this live performance at Lisbon's San Carlos Opera House—fitted in between new productions of *La Traviata* and then *Anna Bolena* in New York and La Scala, Milan. The sound is wooden, the prompter audible and the audience even more so. Forget about them, for the performance, under the sympathetic Franco Ghione, is incomparable. Not only Callas with her unique command of dramatic and vocal nuance, but the then very young Alfredo Kraus is immensely touching as Alfredo, and

Mario Sereni almost equally so as his father. This performance demonstrates just why Callas was so worshipped, and so dominated her era. At bargain price, it is on no account to be missed.

Yet again we have Vienna and its marvellous Philharmonic to thank for Decca's recording in their Janacek series with Sir Charles Mackerras of *From the House of the Dead*. Again orchestra, and indeed chorus, are quite magnificent. The fact that this recording was made within about a month of Karajan's *Aida* demonstrates their sheer range. The cast is entirely Czech, and the performance has all the authority and commitment we have come to expect from Sir Charles in Janacek's music, for whose acceptance in Britain he is almost entirely responsible. This is a grim, pessimistic opera, taken from Dostoievsky's novel about life in a Russian prison camp, but its darkness is illuminated by the human warmth of Janacek's music, and the fervour with which it is performed. Moreover, thanks to Sir Charles and John Tyrell, we can hear it now in the composer's original version, rather than as later 'improved' by Czech conductors. Decca have complemented the performance with a superb Digital recording which adds yet a further dimension to the opera's very considerable impact.

For my final operatic choice we must go back three centuries to Monteverdi's *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria*. The difficulty with Monteverdi's operas is that his scores usually lack orchestration, having no more than a vocal and bass line, so that contemporary performances require editions. This leads to scholarly, at times heated, debate, particularly if Raymond Leppard, as here, is responsible for the edition. For Leppard's use of lush string tone and dramatic brass tends to be censured as unauthentic. Personally I enjoy it and find in it a dramatic warmth absent in more authentic versions. Neither can I believe that the composer himself would necessarily have disapproved. At any rate this recording made by CBS with the cast of the 1979 Glyndebourne performances has Leppard conducting the London Philharmonic, and again as there, realising a most compelling account of the opera. Frederica von Stade and Richard Stilwell are splendid as Penelope and Ulisse; the great scene for the suitors is magnificently done, and an additional bonus among a predominantly young cast is veteran tenor Richard Lewis as the shepherd, Eumete. I strongly recommend this set.

Mahler and Shostakovich dominate my orchestral choices, and all three symphonic recordings are outstanding. That of Mahler's 3rd comes in EMI's much to be praised complete cycle, currently being recorded by the LPO under their superb conductor, and incomparable Mahlerian, Klaus Tennstedt. When last I wrote here, at the end of 1979, it was to recommend their recording of Mahler's 5th symphony. That of the 3rd has even more emotional strength and musical authority—a performance in which it is hard to criticise a single bar. Tennstedt has a sweep and command unparalleled in Mahler today, and the orchestra respond like men possessed. To add to the enormous impact of this recording, made in London's Kingsway Hall, EMI have produced some of their finest digital sound yet

and producer and engineers are to be congratulated on their balance of the massive forces involved. This issue makes me impatient for the next in the series—the 7th symphony. The LPO's performance of it under Tennstedt in the Festival Hall last autumn was memorable.

Digital recording again embellishes the Shostakovich symphonies. Indeed the CBS sound on the 5th is probably the most exciting of any in this selection. It has the right forces too: Leonard Bernstein and the New York Philharmonic, recorded during a 1979 tour of Japan. Virtuoso conducting of a virtuoso orchestra is here found in a work which entirely responds to such treatment. That is not to say that Bernstein is brash or superficial: indeed this is a rhapsodic, almost romantic view of the work, but he knows when to ignite the fireworks, and the band know how to respond. Strongly recommended.

So too is Decca's recording of the 7th 'Leningrad' symphony, part of their complete Shostakovich cycle, again with the LPO, here under Bernard Haitink. There has been debate since Solomon Volkov's *Testimony* appeared — the memoirs of the composer, it is claimed — as to whether Shostakovich in fact wrote this symphony as a patriotic war-time piece after all. It is suggested in the book that he composed it around the sufferings of his people under Stalinism before the war began and only wrote and performed it when the German invasion gave him a politically acceptable motive to do so. It matters not, perhaps—the music is more important than motives—and under Haitink the music sounds a good deal more significant than in some performances of this long, and at times rather obvious, work I have heard. The LPO again play like the front-rank orchestra they are, and the fill-up on Side 4, Shostakovich's early *Age of Gold* satirical ballet suite provides welcome light relief after the rigours and massive textures of the 'Leningrad'.

Finally more Russian music, but from the last century, Tchaikovsky's glorious *Sleeping Beauty*. Here we have not just the Suites, but the whole ballet, complete on two records resplendently played by the BBC Symphony Orchestra under their present Chief Conductor, Russian Gennadi Rozhdestvensky. This issue appeared last summer to celebrate the orchestra's 50th birthday, and it demonstrates just how lucky they are to have Rozhdestvensky as their director, and how warmly they respond to him. I was on tour in Germany and Holland with him and them last May and I know! Another joy of this issue is the sublime harp playing of Sidonie Goossens. How can one possibly believe that she is now 81 and was principal Harpist at the BBCSO's very first concert in October 1930, and has been ever since. A truly remarkable lady.

# LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

## THE POWER OF THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT

*All Things to All Men—The False Promise of the Modern American Presidency.* Godfrey Hodgson. Weidenfeld & Nicolson. £8.95.

This strongly written, knowledgable book presents a formidable case to answer. 'Never' says Mr. Hodgson 'has any one office had so much power as the President of the United States possesses. Never has so powerful a leader been so impotent . . .'. The thesis is applied remorselessly, with many effective illustrations.

It is widely recognised already that the power of the President has been impaired by the Vietnam war and the Watergate debacle. But just before these disasters there was much high placed talk by Arthur Schlesinger and others about the ever-greater power of the Imperial Presidency. Only a few years ago, the complaint was not that the presidency was too weak but that it was too strong.

Mr. Hodgson seeks to go further back and deeper. 'More than forty years ago' he tells us 'Franklin Roosevelt heaved with a giant's strength against the bonds of the office and could not break them . . . all the strongest of his successors Truman and Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon have felt the same frustration and despair.' In other words irrespective of the personality of the President, irrespective also of whether his Party has a majority in Congress, the American Constitution as operated in these times converts the mighty President into a figure of pathetic impotence.

In his last chapter, Mr. Hodgson takes us through a long list of suggested reforms, without providing much for our comfort. He hankers a little after the adaptation of some elements of the European Cabinet and parliamentary system to American traditions and to the formal requirements of the U.S. constitution. But he is scornful of the European achievements in, for example, Britain, France, Western Germany and Italy. 'They offer horrendous examples of the political system's failure to meet social needs.' He finds a measure of hope in the diminution of the President's isolation by a strengthening of the Party system.

If this impressive book has a defect, it arises from the congenital failure of gifted journalists to allow any room for the idealism of politicians. The author might reflect on a saying attributed to Prince Bülow, later the German Chancellor: 'Real statesmen are animated by two motives only—love of country and love of power'. On the evidence of this book, Mr. Hodgson finds it hard to believe in the former.

Nixon not surprisingly gets the worst treatment. I try to make allowance for what might be considered my own favourable bias, but I cannot help finding Mr. Hodgson's anti-Nixon prejudice fairly blatant. He tries every now and then to be fair, but not very successfully. He simply cannot bring himself to allow Nixon any achievements at all in the international sphere. He respects him up to a point for his labours on behalf of the Republican Party, but with no evidence at all decides that his motivation was entirely selfish.

Yet it could be that if some of the more pejorative references were excluded, Mr. Hodgson's main argument might appeal today to Mr. Nixon. After his victory in 1972, he was confronted with the opposition of the media, the

bureaucracy and Congress and it is these forces that Mr. Hodgson insists must be reconciled in some new fashion with presidential power if the whole institution of the Presidency is to be rescued. Maybe President Reagan will find a new answer, beginning with a more rational use of his Cabinet. It is to be hoped that Mr. Hodgson's book will be read and re-read by all the top people concerned.

FRANK LONGFORD

## THE AMERICAN WOMAN IN THE SEVENTIES

*Women in Transition: How Feminism, Sexual Liberation and the Search for Self-fulfillment have altered our lives.* Judith M. Bardwick. Harvester Press. £14.50.

Arguably the Seventies was the most important decade of the century so far. Change ran rampant, much of it inimical to the human race. Populations soared and the concomitants of overpopulation, especially excessive urbanisation and joblessness, became pervasive; hopes of continuing prosperity rapidly faded and were replaced by intractable inflation and deepening recession. The earth was pressing ever closer to its resource limits with oil the most egregious example; the nuclear imbroglio involved us all and by the end of the decade the likelihood of a Third World War, not confined to conventional weapons, was occupying the minds of most sentient people.

Quite remarkable changes in women's roles and values took place during the Seventies, and this broadly based, lucid and challenging book by a US professor of psychology gives a detailed survey of them in her own country. New attitudes were continuously emerging—to work, to parenthood, to sex, to marriage, to divorce. The women's liberation movement was gaining ground rapidly and many of the changes can be regarded as irreversible. Yet at the same time there was widespread confusion amongst women; many of the new concepts were blurred and inchoate, mental conflict abounded as did nostalgia for a less revolutionary era.

Meanwhile the media were having a bonanza. They continuously kept the pot boiling with their panegyrics for hedonistic gratification and orgasmic delight, the promise of paradise in open marriage, the ineffable joy of swinging, the hollowness of conventional sexual morality and the all-consuming boredom of traditional roles based on home and family. But more importantly the media also showed women angry, embittered, disillusioned, frustrated—fighting and demonstrating for their cause in a world remaining obstinately sexist.

Nowhere has the female need for fulfillment and creativity been expressed more clearly than in the work ethic. By the late Seventies the US labour force was crammed with women many of them mothers with preschool children. Work had become Sir Galahad's holy grail. In the past it had been a male prerogative, the means whereby a man attained status, aplomb and individuality. The surrogate offered to the female in the form of marriage was anaemic and insecure; competence was not recognised, accomplishment denigrated. Now, through the proved indispensability of women as a work force, male supremacy could be weakened and finally emasculated.

The issue of maternity is always at the centre of debate in feminist circles. In the America of the Fifties coercive pronatalism reached its apotheosis; large families were the norm; the post war baby boom seemed never ending. Now in 1980 the saga has come full circle. Sexual liberation is perceived as incompatible with high reproductive activity; the traditional mother and housewife,

no longer esteemed, has become increasingly defensive; pessimism about the world's future has been a notable factor in damping down reproductive performance.

Marriage rates have remained high in the US. But divorce rates have been even higher and they reached unprecedented levels in the late Seventies. Laws against divorce were relaxed; alternative lifestyles, especially cohabitation, were no longer showered with societal opprobrium. No longer was there the cosy assumption that marriage should be permanent and monogamous. Yet the pain and agony of divorce still remain and are sensitively sketched by the author—the failure of a romantic dream, the towering syndrome of loneliness, the feelings of guilt, rejection and jealousy.

The final chapter of the book looks to the future of the women's liberation movement. That a new framework for its continued dynamic is necessary is the main conclusion. Mere anger about sexism is not enough; nor is the substitution of masculine goals for those traditionally subserved by women. Instead there should be a broadening of female experience, self awareness and responsibility; commitment to others, irrespective of gender, is mandatory; community life should be fostered to attenuate feelings of anomie, hopelessness and despair.

Judith Bardwick has made a bold attempt to deal with a theme of gargantuan complexity. The text, although sometimes repetitious, is pleasantly jargon free. The book is suitable for lay people as well as professionals and it deserves to circulate widely.

JOHN A. LORAINE

## ALEXANDER BLOK

*The Life of Alexander Blok.* Avril Pyman—Vol. 1: *The Distant Thunder 1880-1908.* £12.50.—Vol. 2: *The Release of Harmony 1908-1921.* £16.50. Oxford University Press.

For many years after his early death in 1921, Alexander Blok was regarded as the last great poet of the Russian XIXth-century tradition, after Púshkin, Lérmontov, and Tyútchev. To-day, it seems equally cogent to see in him the forerunner of a prolific line of modern poets that include Pasternák, Tsvetáeva, Akhmátova, Mandelstám, Mayakóvsky, Khlébnikov, and, in our own day, Joseph Bródsky. The two views are not incompatible—rather, they suggest that there is more continuity in great Russian poetry than is often assumed. Either way, Blok is clearly one of the world's great poets, and it is a stroke of luck for the English reader that *The Life of Alexander Blok*—by far the fullest biography of Blok in any language (Russian not excluded)—should have been written in a readily accessible tongue. The author, Avril Pyman, has been absorbed with Blok since 1959. Married to a Russian artist, she spent over ten years in Moscow, during which time she would seem to have run to earth almost every living witness who ever crossed Blok's path, and obtained access to most of the unpublished material on him. Hence the innate authenticity of her book —and its fearless honesty. She never 'idealises' her hero, whose negative sides in fact appear quite forcefully. By contrast—and this is only justice—Blok's wife, the sorely tried Lyubov Dmitrievna, emerges as a companion of immense patience and understanding and the author of 'wonderfully intelligent letters' of a 'compassionate frankness'.

The opening chapters cover every facet of Blok's early years—of that bygone world of chivalry and culture that 'shaped, made aware', and ultimately provided

what the poet called 'the *éducation sentimentale* of a Russian gentleman'. (Words such as 'profit', 'career', 'ambition' scarcely came into their vocabulary. . ." Hence 'a certain aloof withdrawal . . . from the vulgarities of early twentieth-century life' that became part of the poet's nature.) After all this, one feels one *knows* the future poet so well that subsequent events seem to follow quite naturally: the early poems, conceived in the shadow of Vladimir Soloviev and Sophia the Divine Wisdom, immortalised in the *Songs of the Lady Beautiful* of Blok's first Book; the gradual fall from grace, long foresensed by the poet himself, soon to succumb to the fateful fascination of *The Town*. Dr. Pyman writes of the 'baleful dominion' of this striking beauty—but this is surely less than just. For her inspiration of the *Snow Mask* alone the world would be immensely in her debt (there is nothing more 'elemental'—more 'literally inspired' in Bowra's sense—in all Blok's verse, *The Twelve* included . . .), but Vólokhova was more than this. In her 'romantic incarnation' of 'the wild, untamed spirit of Russia', it was ultimately (and *not* the Lady Beautiful) who assumed the mantle of the 'Russia, my wife' of the *Field of Kulikovo* and most of the 'Russia' poems, *(Ródina)* widely regarded as marking the apogee of Blok's lyric art.

Of the other cycles in Book Three, the *Italian Poems* are treated with especial sympathy and perception. There is also a welcome chapter on the autobiographical fragment, *Retribution*, too often spurned by earlier critics. On *The Twelve*, by contrast, so much has already been written that the author for once has little new to say (though, in dealing with so controversial a poem, which even Blok 'never fully understood himself', it seems rash to affirm that Christ is '*bearing* the (red) flag', when this is nowhere explicitly stated).

Dr. Pyman's own verse translations, 'intended (only) as illustrations to the book' and following, 'as closely as . . . compatible with acceptable English, the rhyme-scheme and rhythms of the original', fulfil their declared aims with striking success. Altogether, her vocabulary is an enviable one and her English a joy to read. More's the pity when she unaccountably lapses into Americanisms. Space precludes more than a mention of Blok's prose: drama, literary criticism, and the socio-political articles of *Russia and the Intelligentsia*. But they are all there and, like the poems, all admirably correlated with the poet's life. 'It has always been a *life* of Blok that I have wanted to write', says Avril Pyman in her Preface. That ambition she has now fulfilled in a manner that compels our admiration and our gratitude. Besides being an outstanding contribution to specialist studies on Blok, her work provides the layman with a colourful, witty, yet essentially serious introduction to one of the most brilliant cultural and intellectual periods in Russian history—the so-called 'Silver Age' of Russian Symbolism.

ROBIN KEMBALL

## A VICTORIAN EDITOR OF CONTEMPORARY REVIEW

*James Knowles: Victorian Editor and Architect.* Priscilla Metcalf. Oxford University Press. £16.50.

Shortly after James Knowles resigned his position as editor of *Contemporary Review* a statement appeared in the magazine that an editor's 'menagerie must not be all lions.' However that might be interpreted, James Knowles certainly included a high proportion of famous contributors during his six years in the editorial chair. He brought to the appointment a high degree of experience and 'flair', obtained in other walks of life, yet the *Contemporary Review* and later the *Nineteenth Century*, which he founded, represented only a part of his

activity. It is to present, perhaps for the first time, a portrait of the whole man that Priscilla Metcalf has aimed in her close-packed, scholarly biography.

The Knowles family represented a section of society of which we in this century have heard and read a great deal:—people who had their roots in craft and the work of the artisan, yet who wished in a disciplined and quite unaggressive way to 'rise' in the world. The Knowles clan were centred in and around Reigate and Kingston, in Surrey, and followed such occupations as tinker, haberdasher and shoe-maker. It was James Knowles the Elder, father of James, the Editor, who effected a very substantial break-through by becoming an internationally famous architect. His achievements include Silverton Park in Devonshire and Friday Grove in Clapham. James the Younger, initially articled to his father, also had well-known buildings to his credit, among them Thatched House Club in St. James' Street and the celebrated Aldworth in Sussex, especially designed for Tennyson. Together, the Knowles' were responsible for the Grosvenor Hotel at Victoria station, a magnificent if neglected pile now fortunately being restored to its former glory.

The erection and actual construction of such places was not the only problem. Such ventures also involved complicated legal deals and what would now be called speculation. For many men it would have been sufficient occupation but not for James Knowles junior, whose interest in journals and magazines had been seen from his early involvement with a local, Clapham periodical.

An opportunity to achieve editorial ambitions came unexpectedly and for somewhat obscure reasons when at the age of thirty-nine he was invited to succeed Henry Alford, Dean of Canterbury and first editor of *Contemporary Review*. Almost immediately, the 'open platform' became more open and contributors such as Gladstone and Herbert Spencer found freedom to express their often unorthodox views. This period, which did so much to establish the style and content of *Contemporary Review*, lasted only six years. The precise cause of the break has not been satisfactorily established. Nevertheless, it left Knowles free to develop a veritable web of architectural and business negotiations as well as the determination to run his own periodical, unhampered by the restrictions of company ownership. *The Nineteenth Century* survived until his death and for a short while afterwards and presented a remarkable galaxy of writers. The success of the journal may well have obscured the fact that under its new Editor, Sir Percy Bunting, *Contemporary Review* was destined to make the more lasting impact.

With its valuable tables of dates and facts and interesting photographs this work will find a place on most library shelves alongside the *Gladstone Diaries* and *Autobiographies of Charles Darwin* and *T. H. Huxley*.

ROSALIND WADE

## FIVE CLASSIC EDINBURGH MURDERS

*Ill Met by Gaslight*. Allan Massie. Paul Harris. £6.95.

A quintet of classic Edinburgh murders set in socio-conscious contrast against the elegant façade of the Athens of the North, and, superficially, a retelling of well-told tales from dark corners of both sides of the Nor' Loch, this is none the less a book with a purpose other than gruesomely to entertain. Mr. Massie is a practitioner of the new Edinburgh School of Apologist Criminologists initiated by the historian Owen Dudley Edwards with his transfiguration of corpse merchant William Burke to the image of sanctity. Like all new movements, this apologist cult requires a fallen idol for scarification, and Mr. Massie has cast Scotland's hitherto unchallenged supreme chronicler of the criminous,

William Roughead, as the necessary scapegoat. Choosing to ignore Roughead's expressed affection for his 'naughty progeny', Mr. Massie sets about him severely for his show of partiality towards the victim at the expense of sympathy for the murderer. Such castigation savours of rough justice. Mr. Massie has relied heavily upon Roughead's pioneering work. Indeed, all five of Mr. Massie's chosen cases have been previously dealt with by Roughead—that of David Haggart in *The Riddle of the Ruthvens;* William Bennison and Eugène Marie Chantrelle in *Rogues Walk Here;* Jessie King in *In Queer Street;* and Donald Merrett in *Knaves' Looking-Glass,* as well as in the definitive *Notable British Trials* volume which he edited. His versions of Roughead's tales are essentially twentieth century in tone, shorn of Roughead's nineteenth-century moral pragmatism. The difference is as between the attitude of a Socialist psychiatrist and a Conservative judge. Evil, for Mr. Massie, is a social consequence; for Roughead, a social irresponsibility, and to that extent indisputably reprehensible and deserving of self-defensive social punishment.

Roughead accuses: Mr. Massie excuses. Jessie King, the infamous baby farmer of Stockbridge, is the victim of a thwarted desire for motherhood; Eugène Marie Chantrelle, merciless seducer, wife-beater and murderer, is the victim of the prevailing monetary system; William Bennison, bigamist, religious hypocrite and poisoner, is the victim of the contemporary animus against divorce. He chose death (for his wife) before dishonour (for himself). *We* are the guilty . . . for callously casting out social failures.

Roughead's literary style, embellished with sundry crockets and finials which even at the time struck an archaic note, was too intricate and ornate for some palates. Mr. Massie's style is penny-plain, careful in its avoidance of colour, and serviceably pedestrian. His mastery of language is not, however, such as to ratify his passing of sentence on Roughead's prose, although, regrettably, that does not prevent him from doing so. Moreover, to impute 'Augustan contempt', 'operatic quality', and 'superior irony' to Roughead is to exhibit a total misunderstanding of his method and motive.

RICHARD WHITTINGTON-EGAN

## SHORTER REVIEWS

**Constitutional Relations between Britain and India. The Transfer of Power, 1942-47.** Volume IX. (HM Stationery Office, £55). This volume of official documents covers 'The Fixing of a Time Limit, 4 November-22 March 1947.' The object of the series is 'to make available to scholars in convenient printed form the more important British historical records relating to the Transfer of Power in India'. In this the series has succeeded with great distinction under the general editorship of Professor P. N. S. Mansergh. He has contributed the Introduction with the Editor, Sir Penderel Moon. The volume includes the whole or extracts from 562 documents. In the early part of the period under review, there was the failure of the London Conference of 3-6 December 1946 and the meeting of the Constituent Assembly on 9 December without the Moslem League taking part. There followed a review of British policy by the Cabinet in conjunction with Lord Wavell, the Viceroy. Churchill had little faith in Wavell as Viceroy and this lack of confidence continued in the Labour Government. Attlee had decided on a new Viceroy in December and had invited Lord Mountbatten to take over. The Prime Minister regarded the differences with Wavell as one of approach. The Viceroy conceived the transfer of power as 'a withdrawal planned on the lines

of a military evacuation from hostile territory'. The British government aimed at a 'friendly transfer of power from British to Indian authorities, with an increasing acquiescence by the Viceroy and British officials in the wishes of the Indian governments'. Ernest Bevin the Foreign Secretary was scathing about the defeatist attitude of Wavell. Writing to the Prime Minister on 1 January 1947, he said that 'with a mind like Wavell's, the demoralisation of the whole of the army and police must be inevitable and I would strongly recommend that he be recalled and that you find somebody with courage who, even if he were the last man left there, would come out with dignity and uphold the British Empire and Commonwealth'. Attlee in his reply agreed that Wavell was a defeatist and would be recalled. There was, however one basic point on which the Cabinet, Wavell and Mountbatten all agreed, namely to fix a definite date for the end of British rule. If is fair, of course to point out that there were differing views on method in the Cabinet itself. On the 20th February the Cabinet issued the historic statement that power would be transferred not later than June 1948; and also announced the impending appointment of Lord Mountbatten as the new Viceroy. He took over on 23 March 1947. The volume covers, of course, other matters, including the problems in Bengal and the Punjab. As in other volumes, the Editors have had unrestricted access to the records in the old India Office and also have had the benefit of other documents, including Attlee and Mountbatten papers.

**The War Machine** (Quartet Books. £6.95). Mr. James Avery Joyce's latest book is a powerful indictment of the arms race. Indeed it is a frightening account of the build up of arms, particularly nuclear weapons between the super Powers and their allies. 'Our primary need' is 'to seek and encourage more sensible co-existence patterns between the rival imperialisms of Russia and America, which are the tap-root of the arms race'. Quite rightly he points to world public opinion, including the Third World, as anxious for disarmament and to the efforts of the United Nations in that direction. He discusses the World Disarmament Campaign started in 1980 and the prospective UN Special Assembly in 1982. He attributes to the Helsinki Agreements more success than is generally accorded to detente. He argues that the initiative for arms limitation must come from the West. He cannot accept that Russia has any aim to dominate Europe; 'the Soviet juggernaut is more myth than reality'! He hopes that the Netherlands will refuse to provide bases for the proposed 572 American nuclear missiles. He wants this before any Russian undertaking to limit their SS-20 medium range missiles and the Backfire Bombers which are directed against Western Europe. Without using the phrase, 'unilateral disarmament', Mr. Joyce is in favour of Western reductions in the belief that Soviet Russia will follow suit. This is, of course, at the heart of the problem. Communism is by its very nature an expansionist ideology directed to world domination. Already the Soviets have used military superiority to impose their will in other states. In Russia itself public opinion is not fully informed or allowed to determine policy. How then can mutual disarmament be assured? This valuable study sets out vividly and impressively all the risks in the arms race, but cannot provide the short answer convincingly.

**Russia 1917: The Kornilov Affair** (Longman. £4.95, paperback). This new study of 'Kerensky and the Break-up of the Russian Army' by

George Katkov follows his well known history of the February 1917 revolution and the establishment of Prince L'vov's Provisional Government. He is now concerned to consider the overthrow of General Kornilov, the Supreme Commander of the Russian armed forces, by Kerensky. This led to the complete demoralisation and loss of fighting capacity of the Russian army, and eased the way for the successful Bolshevik revolution in October 1917. Dr. Katkov has studied the sources afresh and in particular has obtained and published for the first time, so far as he is aware, V. L. Burtsev's material in the *Obshchee Delo,* including part of Kornilov's detailed deposition at the Special Commission of Investigation in September 1917. In addition, Dr. Katkov has examined one of the original typescripts of this deposition, now in the Russian archives of Columbia University. He concludes by referring to 'a violent reaction to Kerensky's mendacious claim to have discovered a powerful conspiracy backed by military forces advancing on Petrograd to restore the old regime', under Kornilov. This is an extremely interesting study which should appeal to students of this revolutionary period.

**Outside the Circles of Time** (Frederick Muller, £10.95). Kenneth Grant was a disciple of Aleister Crowley, and, after the Master's death in 1947, his successor as Head of the Order Templi Orientis, and Crowley's exegeticist. His advanced studies in the occult are daunting reading for the unversed, and this latest treatise of his is no exception. In his own words, 'this book may mean many things to many readers and different things to all, but to none can it mean nothing at all, for the house is constructed in such a manner that no echo can be lost.' If it were not for its logistical and semantic difficulty, it might reach wider areas than convinced occult circles by virtue of its theme. It explores, in the light of inexplicable phenomena such as UFOs, the possibility of life existing outside or beyond humanity, and it seeks to re-evaluate Crowley's ideas, now that 'more than ever before, it is evident that man must find his centre, his "soul", or perish as a self-conscious entity.' He develops the idea that a form of survival from holocaust can be ensured by magical foreknowledge, and that there can be access to other dimensions of being, outside the circles of time and space. Occultists will wish to know that he examines the concept of Aeons running concurrently, and the works of Soror Andahadna, who elucidates the Aeon of Maat and the Forgotten Ones, the Great Old Ones, who are invoked only with great danger. What an extraordinary and fascinating minority cult this esotericism is! (R.W.E.).

**Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded** (Penguin Books. £1.95). Samuel Richardson's novel about the persevering chastity of a maid was first published in 1740, and was a best seller. It is now published in the Penguin English Library, edited by Dr. Peter Sabor with an Introduction by Margaret A. Doody, a lecturer at Princetown University. *'Pamela'*, she writes, 'has never ceased being a controversial work. It is certainly a revolutionary book. It changed the life of the novel as a literary genre, pointing out new directions in subject, style and form'.

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## WAR IN AFRICA: A PROBLEM OF EVIDENCE IN CONTEMPORARY HISTORY


### by David Birmingham


THIS article represents an experiment in generating historical debate on unfamiliar terrain. Can unfamiliar names and details be omitted from historical analysis without leaving a pallid and bloodless history dictated by anonymous forces? Can such an experiment uncover historical parallels which would not occur to the lone digger? The incident for which historical explanation is being sought is in itself unimportant. It occurred in the build up to the Angola civil war in April 1975. When faced, however, with such a kaleidoscopic historical scene as a war it seems necessary to begin with a small verifiable anchor-hold.

The normal explanations for the Angola civil war are perceived to be deep ethnic divisions, rooted in a thousand years of incompatible linguistic, cultural and political evolution. This 'tribal' explanation, much favoured by the media at the time, can be called into question. Did not the politics of confrontation arise out of rival traditions of urban modernisation rather than from the old rural base? Should not the solidarity of the Europeanised leadership be attributed to old-school networks? There is a need to investigate how far the three 'civil war' armies instilled a regional patriotism through the use of protestant church hierarchies and protestant church hymns, Congregationalist, Baptist and Methodist. Was the march to war caused by forces even shallower in their time-depth than the hundred-years-old churches? In the last colonial quarter century, business interests proliferated. It cannot be entirely a coincidence that the two major African nations to undergo severe post-colonial civil wars, Nigeria and Angola, both did so at a moment when oil prospecting was on the point of breakthrough to significant production. Alternative explanation should perhaps be sought in international strategy, in the tensions of détente, in the western protection of its South African investments, in the frustrations of Cuban failure in the New World. Each of these historical levels needs investigation and each presents the historian with difficult and varied tasks in approaching his sources. Within Angola political mobilisation occurred in such unlikely, innocuous, organisations as football clubs. Military success was determined by arms purchases shipped from such un-African shores as Yugoslavia. Financial backing was discussed behind such tightly closed doors as the Dallas board rooms of oil companies. Combat training has been provided by such varied

experts as South Africa, China and Algeria. Mercenary participation was discussed in the oral culture of the unemployed of Bradford. Finally, the hardest sources of all to crack may be the scrambled files which the CIA tried to protect from the Freedom of Information Act. Can any historian seriously expect to embark on such an apparently simple task as explaining a short war in a small country when the ramifications are potentially so far-flung?

On Monday 7 April 1975 the night sky in the Angola city of Luanda was illuminated by a display of gun-fire. Earlier that day there had been rumblings in one of the black shanty-towns. Jeep-loads of four-party patrols had swiftly quelled the confrontation, but not before bloodshed had occurred. The night shooting appeared to involve heavier weapons. The target—intended or accidental—was a South African passenger jet flying low over the northern suburbs. Only minor damage was caused and the plane turned back to Johannesburg after refuelling. A Portuguese aircraft, allegedly carrying the country's future president, later landed unhindered.

The bullets in the fuselage of a South African plane represented a turning point in the history of southern decolonisation in Africa. But were they the last shots of an old war or the first shots of a new one? Was this the culminating achievement of armed black nationalism which had won Katanga, had won Mozambique and was now about to win Angola? Or did those shots relate to the first stage of a militant return of white power driving up from the south? At the end of the day the historian will want to know who fired those shots and why.

The questions which the events of 7 April 1975 raise all require historical explanation, but there is much disagreement over the historical depth which it is necessary to plumb in order to analyse the conflicts of that day. To the average journalist the cause was deemed 'tribal'. Ethnic antipathy, rooted in deep tradition, impeded the growth of a national purpose and set people against people with 'inevitable savagery'. Nothing else was expected of 'barbarous' Africa and no effort was therefore required to explain the incidents of April 7 as they edged Angola closer to civil war. The country's uncomfortable complexity and rapid social change were ignored. Instead the country was rationalised into three static 'tribes' for the benefit of world newspaper readers.

The concept of tribalism in Africa is not, however, one which can easily be justified as a long-term growth of common cultural consciousness. Village societies were commonly more important than tribal ones. Pre-colonial cohesion was not a marked feature even of peoples speaking a common language. The political unity of northern Angola which had been so striking in the sixteenth century gave way to intense war-lord rivalries in the eighteenth century. The interaction of theology and commerce, of politics and family, which transformed and strengthened the old Kongo kingdom in Angola had turned to undermining and destroying it. By the nineteenth century no observer saw northern Angola as being peopled by a single tribe. The historian has, therefore, to seek alter-

native roots for the common political purpose which motivated the 'northern' armed movement which took part in the events of 1975. The presumption of an ancient Kongo ethnic solidarity cannot hold.

The argument in favour of historic unity in the two other broad language zones of Angola is even less compelling than in the case of the old Kongo kingdom. The great highland populations of the south never achieved any political cohesion in pre-colonial times. A dozen trading kingdoms competed sharply for control of markets, caravan-routes, ferry crossings, iron mines, clay pits, fallow farm-land and above all Atlantic slave ports. Co-operation was based on fierce commercial bargaining, on military deterrence, on royal marriage alliances and never on a common Ovimbundu national purpose. Such a purpose had emerged only by 1975 in the face of external threat, in particular the intensification of colonial penetration in its terminal phase before the collapse of colonial government.

The third media-inspired 'tribal nation' to allegedly participate in the Angolan civil war was the one descended from the late medieval kingdom after which Angola is named. This old kingdom was, however, overwhelmed three centuries ago in the first territorial conquest by a European colonial power in Africa. Of far greater interest than the traditional ethnicity of the country's middle zone is the early emergence of social groups which responded to colonial opportunity and created Luso-African 'creole' communities. The hybrid culture of Portugal and Africa affected diplomacy and international relations far into the interior. It led to the growth of a partially literate class of soldiers, clerks and commercial agents who were the representatives of Portuguese enterprise. It formed the nineteenth-century base of a planting industry which gained capital and management skills from Brazil and paved the way for Angola's mid-twentieth century economic coffee miracle. It was not an influence which led to 'Kimbundu' ethnic solidarity, but on the contrary divided the society into collaborators and resisters, into labourers and labour-recruiters, into pockets of isolated mountain refugees and forest fastnesses, of fighters who held out against the unifying force of colonial conquest.

If ethnic loyalties and tribal animosities cannot be seen as the basis of war, a different set of roots should be found to explain the rift in Angolan society which led to the shootings of April 1975. This alternative may be the division of the colonial presence in West Central Africa. In most colonies of Africa the modern sector of society, and its attendant educational and employment opportunities, focusses on a single colonial capital. Angola was different. Throughout the twentieth century it had three focal points. One was indeed the capital, the Portuguese city of Luanda. Another, across the northern border, was the Belgian city of Kinshasa, known for some decades as Léopoldville. The third, was the southern port of Lobito. This division, it might be contended, was a far more fundamental historical factor than the old vernacular frontier which separated the hinterland of the three cities. Emerging twentieth-century politics revolved around leaders whose points of repair were in the modern

colonial sectors of society. Traditional leaders, with a few exceptions, were not of any real importance within this polarised modern society. In the case of Luanda, government bureaucracy was the traditional black entry to the ladder of economic opportunity. The opportunity was always fragile and threatened by spasmodic immigration of poor whites. In the 1950's city blacks were severely threatened by an influx of migrants from rural Portugal who sought and gained preference over black migrants from rural Africa. Skill, literacy and experience began to count for less than colour. Conflict over urban employment created the black political leadership of Luanda in the 1950's. It later led to an outburst of city warfare in February 1961. Those black town dwellers who escaped into exile at that time formed the first generation of leaders in a quasi-Marxist political party called MPLA.

The second city to which Angolans looked was Kinshasa. It was a city of refuge and of exile as well as a city of education and opportunity. Those who went there learnt French as their passport to status employment. It might be argued that a difference of modern language among city-dwellers was more significant in politics and in war than a difference of vernacular. The Kinshasa Angolans probably went into small business firms more readily than into clerical service in the Belgian state bureaucracy. How does one launch a research project on the rural migrant sector of a large city as unstable as Kinshasa, and what are the lessons to be learned from European urban studies? In the case of Kinshasa the evidence has been overlaid by the huge influx of 1961 which brought over 100,000 refugees into Zaire. They too tried to get to the city, to get employment, in some cases to join the incipient armed forces of the exiled political leaders. These leaders remained quite distinct from those whose cultural roots lay in the rival city of Luanda. Their party became the FNLA.

The third city to which rural Angolans drifted, or were compulsorily drafted by forced labour practices, was the southern port of Lobito. It was an even newer town than Belgian Kinshasa and came to replace the old roadstead of Benguela in the 1930's when the great Copper Belt railway was finally completed. Any attempt to explain the divisions in Angolan society without examining the rise of the new dockworkers of Lobito would be unbalanced. The topic would take on particular interest because of the rivalry and contrast between the new port and the old one, which had been founded in 1615. The old port, with its *mestiço bourgeoisie*, identified easily with Luanda's politicians in a way which Lobito did not. Lobito therefore proved a fertile ground for yet a third political party, UNITA. To attribute this distinctiveness to ethnicity before the first serious attempt at an urban social history has been launched would seem premature.

Angola became a nominally Catholic country in the course of its submission to Portuguese rule during the years 1875 to 1925. The Catholic Church was not, however, a mission church with a mandate to proselytise, heal and educate. It was a branch of the metropolitan church and

therefore primarily concerned with the white expatriate and settler community and with a small assimilated élite of black and mixed-race peoples in the larger commercial and administrative centres. Only in the far south did a Catholic mission church of French parentage make any impact. In the rest of the country the colonial regime left an educational, spiritual and medical vacuum which Protestants eagerly sought to fill. The three Protestant Churches which took primary root in the rural areas of Angola formed a basic pre-requisite for the emergence of three distinct political parties.

The Baptist Church chose the north as its field of activity in the 1870's. From the outset its activity was seen as a threat by Portugal. The Portuguese sphere of influence would be eroded and the slender efforts at cultural colonisation undermined. When the great northern rebellion of 1913 broke out English-speaking Baptists were blamed for inciting insurrection in the zones of compulsory labour recruitment. The charge was ironically false and Protestant missions, Baptist included, did their utmost to avoid conflict with the civil authority and to instil concepts of law and order among their converts. Despite the caution with which they proceeded Baptists were seen by Africans as the main guarantee against commercial and government exploitation. Baptists also provided an educational network in Angola, as well as among the migrants who went over the border to Kinshasa, and later among the large refugee population. A detailed study of church structure, of the hierarchy of the village deacons, of the lines of communication, of the literate personnel of the mission stations, must surely shed light on the section of society in which modern politics suddenly surfaced around 1960. Between 1961 and 1974 the colonial war, which disrupted the north for thirteen years before the civil war began, strengthened loyalty to the Baptists. Officially Portugal declared all northerns to be Catholic and suppressed the Protestant church. Underground it became the symbol of resistance. By 1973, when the dragooning policies of the early war years were ceding place to political and economic campaigns for 'hearts and minds', tacit recognition was granted to the fact that negotiations could only succeed if conducted with recognised Baptist elders. The role of that leadership in the civil war and in post war reconciliation needs to be explored.

The Methodist Church, complete with American-style bishops, served a similar role in creating an integrated leadership of school-leavers, lay preachers and medical orderlies in central Angola and, to a more limited extent, in the capital. As an historical source the social columns of the mission newspapers provide an unrivalled insight into the kinship web of modern political party structure. The question which arises, however, is why was it that the Methodist families were most prone to adopt Marxist ideals in their liberation struggle. Were more Methodists employed in bureaucratic positions where ideals of the worker-peasant state could be discussed without real fear of economic loss? Did Baptists in the richer coffee zones hold more tightly to capitalist concepts of land ownership and wage labour? Or is it possible to read too much into the

Methodist ideology out of which a preacher's son rose to become a Marxist president?

The Congregationalists were the most successful confession to mobilise a mass party. Television film of 1975 shows huge rallies singing political hymns to mournful Presbyterian tunes. The suddenness with which UNITA mobilised the highland peoples into a common loyalty when their leaders achieved a Portuguese cease-fire in 1974 can be attributed to several potential factors. UNITA probably had, in Jonas Savimbe, the most effective, charismatic, leader. The highlands had not got the long history of military failure and recriminatory schisms which affected the rival parties. The UNITA constituents were uniformly threatened by highland land-hunger accentuated by white land-alienation. The tradition of hostility to city government carried over from colonial rule to rule by new urban leaders. The UNITA leadership, more surely than the others, had studied Mao's dicta on rural politicisation. But above all the Congregationalist network had survived years of Portuguese harassment to provide an effective seal on the new highland unity.

Investigating the political role of business appears to be an even more difficult task than looking into the social impact of semi-clandestine churches in a warring colony. The active role of business in Angola's politics pre-dates the civil war by twelve years. In 1963 Portugal liberalised its nationalistic financial restrictions to allow new foreign investment to generate wealth with which to pursue the colonial reconquest. In the vacuum year 1974, when Portugal collapsed, business reassessed its position. In 1975 it became suddenly convinced that Angola possessed hidden riches which must, in the style of the original African scramble, be safeguarded from rival claimants.

Tracing the flow of political levies and voluntary contributions from private enterprise to political armies is unlikely to be easy. Where, for instance, did the FNLA gain the funds to buy up Luanda's leading newspaper in the heart of opposition territory? Will it ever be possible to unravel the financial links between Angola exiled politicians and the personal copper fortune of President Mobutu of Zaire. Were the weapons used in the incident of 7 April 1975 supplied by partisan foreign governments or had they been purchased through African gun-runners such as Frederick Forsythe portrayed in *The Dogs of War*? And when did the biggest of the oil companies, Gulf, decide—as it apparently did—to match United States funding of one political party with comparable royalty funds for the opposite side?

These queries underline the difficulties of source and method which confront an historian wishing to tackle a piece of contemporary history such as that relating to Angola in the year 1975. Before even beginning to analyse the campaigns it becomes clear that much research into the social background is necessary. As for such detail as who shot at the South African plane, it is likely that the best financed party of the north was the one with the best weapons at that date. If so, they shot the wrong plane. The fact that beleaguered South Africa was still using Luanda as

a necessary stage on its long haul to Europe may not yet have become a major issue in Angola. But the shooting must have been one factor influencing South Africa as it prepared to intervene in place of Portugal north of the Kunene River.

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[David Birmingham is Professor of Modern History in the University of Kent at Canterbury. He previously worked in African universities and at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London.]

The April issue of *Contemporary Review* includes *An Open Letter to the (Former) American Hostages* by Robin Woodsworth Carlsen, *Will the Polish Eagle Fly?* by Leonard E. Schwartz, *Freedom of Information in a Westminster Style Government* by Tom Riley and *Fringe Benefits* by Adrian Rendle.

# EUROPE: THE LABOUR OF GETTING OUT

## by Austin Mitchell, M.P.

LEADING the Labour Party is an exercise in schizophrenia; presenting a radical face to the rank and file, a commonsensical caution to a conservative electorate. Leaders are influenced more by the internal audience in opposition but don the cloak of respectability in power. The voice may be the voice of Tony Benn but the hands are the hands of Harold Wilson. Yet it would be wrong to argue from these past trends to a conclusion that Labour will do a Polaris on the Common Market, huffing and puffing but ultimately staying in. In shattering the post-war consensus, Mrs. Thatcher has broken the norms of post-war politics. She has also created a whole new set of problems which themselves make new measures necessary. One of them is a prompt departure from the E.E.C.

Both major parties are and will remain divided on the issue, and the Liberals only conceal their own disagreements by using an overt commitment to Europe to cloak opportunistic exploitation of every anti-European issue as if the Market and its rules did not exist. All this is constant. Yet much has changed. The Labour Conference has expressed itself overwhelmingly for withdrawal. Pro-marketeers in the Parliamentary Party are fewer in number, more apologetic and defensive and the great majority of the P.L.P. are ready to say 'Enough is Enough'. Indeed, this disposition must be strengthened by the emerging split, for the main commitment shared by the *Rassemblement Du Peuple Jenkins* is an open-ended one to Europe and the main reason for their disgruntlement with the Party is its decision to leave. Their complaint is not entryism but exitism. 'My Europe 'tis of thee!' Those who for a decade have been able to impose their Euro-fanaticism on a reluctant party by voting for Heath's decision to enter, ignoring conference decisions and campaigning against the party line in 1975 and enforcing commitment in the Labour government are effectively saying that the albatross is more important than the party around whose neck they have hung it, an attitude which is neither socialist nor democratic but which strengthens the 'Exitiste' forces considerably. Moreover, this more single-minded Labour Party now finds itself with a popular issue. British public opinion, favourable to the Market from 1975 to around 1977-8, has become overwhelmingly anti-E.E.C. It will remain so because, unlike the earlier support, hostility is based on the lessons of bitter experience which time can only reinforce. Indeed the only remaining arguments left to the Misinformation Industry financed by the Commission are claims that the nature of the beast will change in some sudden unspecified way, or the fear that not only is there no salvation outside the market but that to leave it is to lose those alms presently distributed. The one argument panders to naivety, the other to fear. Both are wrong.

The history of Labour attitudes to the market shows a fundamental

and underlying hostility not to internationalism or idealism but to a self-interested commercial and agricultural protection society: the National Farmers' Union turned into a supra-national system of government. Kevin Featherstone's description of Gaitskell's attitude to nationalism and the E.E.C. in *Contemporary Review* (Vol. 238, No. 1380) is a travesty of the facts. Gaitskell was very impressed by an authoritative study of the economic consequences of U.K. participation, which confirmed his own view that we would lose much more than we could gain from membership. He was convinced that this detriment would not be outweighed by any conceivable gain on the political side because the Treaty of Rome was concerned to set up an industrial and agricultural benefit society. The preamble speaks of the signatories' 'determination to establish the foundations of an ever closer union among the European people', but the treaty itself is limited to the setting up of a customs and economic union. So it has remained. The outcome was predicted by William Ropke, Professor of Economics at Lausanne, who discerned a Gresham's law of customs unions in which bad policies drive out good. So E.E.C. problems have been solved where possible at the expense of non-members. The restrictive trading entity has been of little benefit to third countries because trade diversion has outweighed trade creation. There was equally no presumption that membership would be of benefit to us. Labour's problem throughout, therefore, was the implicit tension between an idealistic commitment to internationalism, which made many people sympathetic to an institution presenting itself in these terms, and the harmful economic realities of a club devoting three quarters of its revenues to agriculture and designed to protect rich industrial nations.

Time and experience have made Labour more anti-E.E.C. by underlining the comparative unimportance of the first aspect and the directly harmful consequences of the second. In agriculture the lesson is clear: a country far from self-sufficiency has no interest in paying high continental prices for food most of which is obtainable more cheaply elsewhere. Nor does anyone else benefit from the accumulation of massive surpluses which are then either stored or dumped on the world market to the detriment of our old suppliers. To the extent that this is widely recognised we are all C.A.P. reformers now. Yet this decade has not produced any effective change in the beast. The next cannot modify a structure which suits the interests of everyone else, including the new mainly agricultural states currently admitted or negotiating. The Thatcher re-negotiation made no real difference to this position. Instead, it gave us a temporary lightening of a still inequitable burden at the price of abdicating our claim to fundamental reforms and of assuming, to protect our agriculture at a time when the pound is overvalued, the highest food prices in the Market.

Trade is a similar story. The Commission's professional publicists have done their best to disguise the basic reality. The share of our exports going to the Six was rising more quickly from 1958 to 1970 than it has since, while the share of our imports coming from the Six increased more

slowly in the earlier period than later. So the main development since entry has been a trade deficit which has been getting steadily worse. The manipulations are legion. Much is made of 1980 figures when domestic depression in Britain, moving more rapidly and deeply than in the other countries, acted as a form of import control and cut demand for imports while at the same time our increasing (and increasingly compulsory) oil exports to the E.E.C. prettied the figures. Other techniques are to change base dates to the most favourable, such as 1975, enabling a then deficit of £345 million on oil to be turned into a surplus now of £1,088 million. Trade in basic materials such as diamonds, few of which are subject to the Common External Tariff, is added in to improve the figures though this, like the oil trade, will take place whether we are in or out. Denmark and the Irish Republic are always added to the six in comparisons of before and after, though there our trading balance has improved since 1970 despite, rather than because of, the E.E.C. Finally, the apologists concentrate on the ratio of exports as a percentage of imports—much as if trying to convince a bank manager that a rising overdraft could be ignored so long as debits did not increase as a percentage of credits.

All this statistical sleight of hand has to be mobilised to disguise the basic realities. The all-important trade in manufactured goods (less precious stones) has deteriorated from an even balance with the six at the start of the decade to a massive, job-losing, four billion pound deficit by the end, (compared to a five and a half billion surplus with the rest of the world). This was inevitable. We dismantled a higher tariff against them than they against us; it's easier to penetrate a small market from a larger than vice versa, they (particularly the Germans) had already generated economies of scale which we, growing more slowly, never attained.

By contrast, our trade with countries other than the six has held up remarkably well. Taking the all-important trade in manufactures (again, leaving out precious stones) the import-export ratio has fallen over the decade by a third in the case of trade with the six but only one fifth in the case of the rest of the world. So our trade with the market which should have done well, had the initial hopes of benefits from a bigger market been justified, in fact did much worse than our trade with areas where we were putting ourselves at a disadvantage by forfeiting established preferences. Our trade with the rest of the world now has to finance our massive deficit with the area which poses the main threat to British industry.

A Labour Party focusing its attention on national survival must be preoccupied with these facts and hence with a Common Market which exacerbates the problems of industrial decline. Government policies have precipitated a fall in output greater than that which took place from 1929 to 1931. The decline is certain to go on, since continued domestic depression and a substantially overvalued pound preclude escape. So Labour's preoccupation with survival must become dominant, particularly when E.E.C. rules outlaw or inhibit many of the strategies of industrial regeneration. Import management, or at least that directed

against their manufactures, is out. Devaluation will be far more difficult if, as it entirely likely, the government is driven into the European Monetary System. Aid for and state participation in industry, use of oil revenues to generate investment, the interventionist strategies appropriate to the world's first undeveloping country will all be more difficult in the E.E.C.

As Labour inclinations become increasingly obvious, inevitable scaremongering about survival outside the Market will grow. It already conditions Kevin Featherstone's confidence that Labour will not leave. Yet how realistic is this propaganda? The gains from departure are clear: cheaper food, an end to the burden of supporting the market and the C.A.P., the ability to exploit fish stocks producing an annual harvest of £520 million, most of which we are currently giving away: new arrangements with traditional food suppliers. Ending free trade might have a detrimental effect on U.K. exports to other E.E.C. members, though nothing like as serious as Featherstone suggests. The 43% of exports at present going to the E.E.C. includes North Sea oil, diamonds and basic materials such as tin and copper not dutiable under the Common External Tariff. All this would continue. Engineering would pay a tariff of 4-7% which would make little difference to it, or to the multinationals: Ford has frequently said that the market is neutral in its decisions. We may lose on textiles and other items where the E.E.C. maintains high tariffs to keep out imports from outside countries. Yet in any case the gaps in our market created by E.E.C. protectionism have been filled by imports from the E.E.C. itself and we can always set our own tariffs or quotas to suit our industrial needs in areas where world trade is increasingly managed. In most cases we have more to gain in our home market by keeeping out imports from the six than losing in theirs and as a deficit state we are in the better bargaining position in a changed situation. A reviving, competitive, Britain with a competitive currency would provide a better base for penetrating the community than a declining, poverty stricken, industrial graveyard bearing a disproportionate and growing burden of unemployment. What would happen in the case of trade with Denmark and Eire must depend on whether they decide to stay after we leave. The answer in the case of Denmark is probably not. As for the bogey of a run on the pound included by Kevin Featherstone in his catalogue of disasters arising from withdrawal, perhaps he fails to realise the problem of overvaluation which oil has produced. The pound is now some 50% overvalued compared to 1976. Indeed, it went up in 1980 by 12% in nominal terms, a fifth in real terms. Even a massive devaluation can only be beneficial.

The procedures for withdrawal are as straightforward as the fears are groundless. A manifesto commitment is the necessary lever, far more useful and far more a part of the British political tradition than a referendum. The Wilson referendum was a means of concealing party splits on this issue which are no longer as serious. It was specifically stated to be binding for one Parliament only. Given the superior alternative of a

clear choice between party commitments no referendum is necessary and, indeed, might be undemocratic by throwing open to question a decision the electorate have already ratified, and calling into doubt an essential part of Labour's strategy. With four million unemployed for whom to find work, a referendum is a luxury no government, trying to till the economic desert which Labour will inherit, can afford. The very uncertainty of such a referendum would hinder government in dealing with both the crisis and the Market: to take a year out of decision-making to fight a referendum as we did from 1974-5 is something we must never do again.

Election victory would be followed by the immediate repeal of section two of the European Communities Act, legislation to leave all substantive E.E.C. regulations standing until they can be changed, immediate withdrawal from the C.A.P. (which would be replaced by a prompt restoration of deficiency payments) and phased withdrawal from other institutions. Damaging commitments would go first and we would have to have immediate freedom to devalue, impose tariffs, pursue an interventionist industrial policy and an active regional policy. Yet for the rest most E.E.C. powers on industry and trade are negative rather than positive. Everything else can be dealt with at leisure. There may even be some regulations, on transport regulation for instance, which we would wish to keep. The need is not to bring the whole structure down immediately but to put ourselves in a position to pick and choose and to negotiate urgently our future trading relationship using the threat of restriction of our imports as a bargaining counter to protect our exports.

We are now moving into a very difficult constitutional situation in which a European propaganda machine in London and Brussels, financed ultimately by the British taxpayer, is devoting a substantial proportion of its effort to attacking the official policy of the official opposition. Indeed we now have a British government unit doing the same. Both will try to create the impression that Labour is embarking on a difficult and dangerous course, perhaps even on one more enfeebling than membership itself. This will be echoed by higher-minded idealists such as Kevin Featherstone. It is essential to see all this for what it really is—self interested misinformation based on a distorted view of Europe—and Britain. Withdrawing from the E.E.C. is straightforward and simple, a world removed from the arcane mystery which Euro-fanatics describe. A parliament which cannot bind its successor is quite capable of abrogating the Treaty of Access. All the assurances at the time of accession and the referendum told us as much. We act; then we negotiate over the reactions. These would be neither punitive nor bitter but a straightforward calculation of self-interest on both sides. Britain wants long term relationships with European neighbours, not the perpetual haggles of an essentially commercial relationship in which we are the suppliant because we have agreed to enter an institution which does not suit us, on terms which positively harm us. Labour leaving the E.E.C. is neither a step to socialism in one country nor a retreat into the past but a move to a

situation where Britain can rebuild industrially and carve out a more constructive role based on economic strength.

The E.E.C. is not Europe. We have more to gain than to lose economically and politically by reversing the balance of manufactured trade with the E.E.C. countries and by buying food from outside countries on our own terms. There is no moral law which describes as nationalist a policy of non-discrimination in international economic relations, or as internationalist one which requires us to absorb the surplus products of German industry and French agriculture. There are, of course, some Labour M.P.s whose emotional commitment to a European federalist dream is so great that, as a critic once said of the advocates of free trade, their zeal for the dogma outweighs alike consideration for its truth and concern for its effects. Their consciences may force them to vote against the next Labour government on the issue of withdrawal. If they do they will vote against the express and declared wishes of the country, the self-interest of the nation and the general will of their party. They will not, however, have the effect they had in 1971 because their numbers will be small and they will be cancelled out by Tories on the opposition benches who will help to save us from the *sotto voce* nightmare which is the reality of membership. Britain will then have struck a blow at the new nationalism posing as supra-nationalism and will have contributed to the harmonious development of world trade and to peaceful and equitable relations between all nations. More important we will have set out on a policy of building up our strength and national self-confidence instead of degenerating into Europe's social-security scrounger, whining, complaining, increasingly dependent and, ultimate irony, paid out of our own money.

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[Austin Mitchell has been Labour Member of Parliament for Grimsby since 1977. He was PPS to J. D. Fraser, Minister of State for Prices and Consumer Protection and has been an Opposition Whip since 1979. Publications include *Politics and People in New Zealand* and *Whigs in Opposition 1815-30.*]

# THE OIL SITUATION AND PRODUCER-CONSUMER COOPERATION

## by Mohamed Mazouni

GREAT changes have taken place on our planet over the last few decades, one of the most important of which was the achievement of sovereignty and/or recovery of natural resources by those countries whose economic and social development is far from a decent minimum. It is questionable whether the developing producer countries have really increased their power and reduced their degree of dependency on consumer countries by proclaiming their rights and their sovereignty over their natural resources. By formally relinquishing full control over natural resources, the developed consumer countries have not necessarily lost power and become more dependent on developing producer countries.

Worldwide attention is currently fixed on the energy question, particularly on gas and oil, as is generally the case during periods preceding international energy conferences, and particularly before OPEC meetings. This last year has been full of political events whose significance and consequences have even now not been completely analysed by chancelleries, governments and companies' top management.

After the fall of the Shah of Iran, Teheran's new leaders quickly let the world know (as did the leaders of Norway, Canada and Great Britain before them) that they did not intend to use up their gas and oil reserves beyond what was required to satisfy their own economic and social needs. The result was a decrease of 2 million barrels per day in the amount of oil available. What followed is well known: the anti-OPEC campaign; the Carter energy plan by which the American people were asked to respect a policy of austerity and rationing; bonuses offered to fuel-importing companies in the U.S. with the resultant reduction in oil availability for other consumers, particularly in Europe and Japan; the Tokyo Summit; etc. It would be difficult to overlook the correlation between events in the Middle East and Iran and the vital and exhaustible gas and oil reserves in the Gulf. These are not the only raw materials vital to world political and economic stability. Prices of food items such as wheat and sugar have undergone additional and considerable increases since 1974 simply because developed nations control 90% of the world's phosphate fertilizer production. In addition, phosphates are a source of uranium which also provides energy. A look at where the most promising reserves of this valuable raw material are located will pinpoint some of the world's major areas of regional and international tension. What would normally be a problem of decolonisation, whose solution resides in the simple exercise of the right of self-determination, a recognised right of all peoples, becomes an open conflict.

Having recovered their natural resources, have developing countries gained the capacity to set prices on them? Since developed countries hold

exclusive control over the consumers' markets, signifying a near monopoly of transport services, distribution networks, production technology, equipment and operational management as well as the financial and monetary system, they can and do not fail to set the prices, not only of goods and services provided to developing countries, but also of the raw materials which they purchase from those countries. Is not oil an exception to this rule? Out of the total energy consumption of the main OECD countries, OPEC oil imports represent 17% for the U.S., 35% for West Germany, and 50 to 60% for Japan, France, Italy and Holland. Compared to total oil consumption OPEC oil imports represent 36% for the U.S., 64% for West Germany, 77% for Japan and 95% for France. This ostensible dependency is in reality of much less significance than is apparent, for several reasons.

In terms of quantity, multinational, national and independent companies, based in the major OECD countries, control a major part of OPEC oil through partnership contracts. The portion actually under OPEC control is not sold to industrial consumer countries in the form of refined products or petrochemicals through an OPEC distribution system, but mainly in the form of crude to those same companies. In terms of value, any increase in oil prices is an advantage to the industrial consumer countries and their companies, firstly because they own or have at their disposal the majority of production facilities, and secondly, because they can and do absorb the value which results, with no appreciable loss thanks to the monetary, financial and economic mechanisms which they control completely. On the other hand, most of the OPEC nations, because of their low development level and high degree of dependency, lose the total value of what they produce through the combined effects of the devaluation of the dollar (the currency of account) and the inflation imported from industrial consumer countries.

A reminder of the inequity of the present monetary system is not necessary. The dollar is the main reserve currency, the principal source of international liquidity (80%) and payment, and almost the only instrument used to effect oil quotations and transactions, whereas the American GNP represents 25% of world GNP but only 13% of world trade. The cause of inflation in industrial nations as seen in the UNCTAD report of August 1978, is attributed to four structural factors: conflict between different social groups over the distribution of available revenue; imbalance between the level and structure of government expenditures and the means of financing them; conflict between the full utilisation of national resources and balance of payments stability; and the downward inflexibility of prices on practically all semi-manufactured products, which favours general price increases, whereas changes in productivity or demand bring on changes in relative prices alone.

It is necessary to recall the unanimous conclusions of the experts of the industrial consumer countries. Against an overall world inflation level of 11 to 12% for 1979, the increase in oil prices does not exceed 1.5 to 2 percentage points. This brings us to the very heart of the political and social systems of the industrial countries, whose declining vitality can

only be stabilised or revived through a profound transformation of the international economic order or by transferring inflation to the developing countries. The indisputable conclusion is that the purchasing power of developing countries, and particularly of OPEC nations, is constantly being eroded through the combined effects of the devaluation of the dollar and inflation, structurally generated and systematically transmitted by the industrial consumer countries. It is not a reasonable course to maintain and if further proof were needed, an examination of the present and future oil situation will certainly provide it.

Following the major political events which took place in Iran and more generally in the Middle East in 1978, the phase of chronic disturbances to the world oil balance entered a new and dangerously uncontrolled period. Its major characteristics are an increasingly unstable and precarious balance between oil supply and demand and a malfunction in the supply network. During the first quarter of 1979, the increase in OPEC production was nearly 5% above that of the same period in 1978, or 30 mbd compared to 28.7 mbd. Nigeria, Iraq and Kuwait increased their production between 38 and 45%. Venezuela, Algeria, Ecuador and Gabon were operating at 90% of their maximum capacity. Saudi Arabia and Kuwait greatly exceeded the production objectives which they had set, with a production of 9.3 mbd instead of 8.5 mbd and 2.6 mbd instead of 2 mbd respectively. These figures show that OPEC is assuming its international responsibilities by not reducing production when demand increases. Such excessive demand is the result of fear of shortages and leads to the establishment of huge stocks to the detriment of consumers' immediate needs. High demand will then be followed by slack demand and so on and so forth, with nonetheless a continual upward trend.

According to a number of recent estimates and theories on growth rate and the rate of energy conservation, the demand for OPEC oil by 1985 will be between 35.5 mbd and 47 mbd, and will reach 35.5 mbd to 58.5 mbd by 1990, compared to today's average of 30 mbd. However accurate these predictions may be, there is no doubt that there will be a serious crisis in supply, whether it appears in the immediate future or in the 1990's. The same statement holds true for natural gas, the ideal substitute for oil in industrial and domestic use. Despite the superior qualities of gas, its price remains below that of oil so that there is no motivation to exploit the great quantities of gas presently being flared in the Middle East at the rate of 2.2 mbd.

Will industrial consumer countries continue to postpone implementing the measures required for oil conservation and substitution to avoid future disaster on the basis of misleading cycles of recession-inflation and accumulation-utilisation of stocks? Or will they accept and encourage real oil price increases in order to stimulate the development of alternative sources of energy? The industrial consumer nations wish to guarantee their supply of oil and gas during the period of transition to more lasting energy sources. This perfectly legitimate and understandable desire is unfortunately accompanied by a double curse. On the one hand, the

devaluation of the dollar and transferred inflation are eroding the developing producer nations' purchasing power and are causing political resistance and social rigidity. On the other hand, perversions of the market—by those who control the production, transport, storage, distribution network and technology—are leading to sudden cyclical price increases and their corollary the recession-inflation cycle, social rigidity and political resistance. Such a spiral, though dangerous, does not seem to be stimulating the development of alternative sources of energy which the non-renewability of gas and oil requires, nor does it preserve anyone's long-term interests.

The OPEC nations wish to ensure their development before the non-oil future, during the transitional period, that is the three coming decades. This will be impossible if their purchasing power is constantly reduced to nothing by the devaluation of the dollar and imported inflation. In order to stop this absurd cycle, it is the historic responsibility of OPEC to bring the price of gas into line with that of oil as quickly as possible, and to index the latter on the basis of the devaluation of the dollar and imported inflation, with a regular increase in real terms. This will progressively encourage profound and healthy structural changes in the economies of the industrial countries. It is the historic responsibility of the OPEC nations and their companies to commit themselves to a real development effort, the only means of transforming their present non-renewable resources into a more durable resource: human know-how. It is the duty of the industrial nations and their companies to share their operational and management expertise. They can do this profitably, and without fear. Their profit will be in the form of renumeration, or increased employment in 'most-favoured-company status' for supply. It is the historic responsibility of the industrial nations and their companies to open the markets which they control to products from the OPEC countries, particularly petrochemical products.

The developing nations are working determinedly to acquire the expertise necessary to gain access to innovation. Developed countries, while doubling their efforts for new discoveries, will have a tremendous Third World demand to meet in the areas of infrastructure and urbanisation, agriculture, nutrition, energy, environment, and the quality of life, today and in the future.

From the foregoing, we can conclude that there are three major obstacles to cooperation between producer and consumer countries. First, there is the time factor. Within a finite time period, the OPEC producer countries must establish the basis for their future development, and developed consumer countries must prepare the transition to an economy based on longer lasting sources of energy. There are defined periods within this finite limit during which industrial exchanges will take place between the companies present. Secondly, political and economic strategies of different nations and companies must have a minimal degree of compatibility. In the international context and with regard to oil in particular, it is evident that the existence of trouble spots in the Middle East and

Africa, and the erosion of the purchasing power of oil revenues by dollar devaluation and imported inflation, constitute the major obstacles to cooperation between OPEC producers and Western consumers. Strategic compatibility and the existence of viable projects during a specified period are not the only elements necessary to guarantee mutually profitable cooperation. In addition it is necessary that the participants have an adequate structural level and sufficient dynamism to undertake such projects.

It is increasingly apparent that an inadequacy of supply in relation to demand in the world energy situation for the coming decade is in store. This makes it imperative for producer and consumer countries to set out on a path toward objective cooperation which cannot be achieved unless there is additional cooperation between the national companies of the OAPEC and OPEC nations. Through the exchange of knowledge and experience and cooperation between managers concerning organisational tools and working methods, these companies will consolidate and broaden the middle and long-term strategies of these countries, which will ensure a real basis for development and prepare for the post-oil period. All other factors being equal, these various forms of cooperation between companies will tend to create a climate in which the OPEC countries and the Western industrial nations can take the important decisions for which they are responsible.

To say that establishing a basis for cooperation will take a long time and that the risk of confrontation and even deflagration is terribly high is a pessimistic statement. On the other hand, to affirm that the results of cooperation will be exponential despite the time needs for its establishment, would be an over-optimistic view. In attaining independence and proclaiming their rights and sovereignty over their natural resources, developing producer countries have not in fact increased their power or reduced their dependency on developed consumer countries. The lack of a solid base for development for the majority are keeping these countries in a tragic situation of technological dependency *vis-a-vis* developed consumer nations. This makes all efforts, as for example those of OPEC, fruitless in the fact of the inevitable exhaustion of gas and oil supplies over the next thirty years at a maximum. It is within this extremely limited period of time that these countries will have to free themselves from their technological dependency.

Whether these decisions will be taken before it is too late will become all too clear in the very near future.

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[Dr. Mohamed Manzouni is Executive Vice-President of Sonatrach, Algeria.]

# THE OXFORD OF 1887 AND TODAY

## by A. L. Rowse

I HAVE been asked to comment on Edward A. Freeman's article on late Victorian Oxford, 'Oxford after Forty Years', (*Contemporary Review* May 1887, Volume 51) in convenient contemporary jargon to 'update' it, and say what I think of Oxford today.

First, then, for the perspective. Professor Freeman was writing some ten years after the important Royal and Statutory Commissions of 1872-7, which re-shaped the old Oxford and laid the foundations of what it has since become and is today. He was commenting on their work, as I am to comment on him and his views.

Edward Augustus Freeman (1823-1892), at the time Regius Professor of Modern History, was the second figure among the academic historians who prevailed at Oxford. His predecessor, Stubbs, had a touch of greatness about him, and the two admired each other, as Kingsley wrote:

> See, ladling butter from alternate tubs,
> Stubbs butters Freeman, and Freeman butters Stubbs.

Outside the university was Oxford's greatest historian, the only rival of Macaulay, James Anthony Froude. He was always a figure of controversy, and Freeman—who was a prolific *Saturday* reviewer (something like the inferior professors in the Sunday papers today)—pursued Froude with animus all his life. Stubbs had more justice of mind, and wrote of Froude: 'He is a man of genius, and has been treated abominably.' What the academics could not forgive was that he was not only a man of genius, who wrote like an angel, but was also a man of the world and a best-seller.

One can see something of what Freeman was from his article. He was a man of gifts and wide learning; a prolific and diffuse writer, perceptive in some fields, particularly about architecture and the history of towns. But he was a man of strong moralistic convictions, with little justice of mind, no sense of humour or proportion, vehement in expression, who exaggerated in everything. He was a Gladstonian Liberal, and something of a reformer; it is interesting to see how fossilised the liberal reformer really was.

Naturally he had some good points to make. A student of architecture, on which he wrote his better books, he hated that he called 'the astonishing rage' for building, destroying decent old buildings and perpetrating academic suburbia in North Oxford. A man of prejudices, he detested Benjamin Jowett's Balliol, which set the model for the new Oxford. He did not like the big dominating new hall, but 'the new chapel has come into being only by mutilating one of the most perfect pieces of design . . . a chapel, library and turret, modest enough but the work . . . of some consummate master of his art.' 'Consummate' was a typical exaggeration for what was just charming and decent; but Freeman was right about the

overwhelming horror of Balliol's front quad. What would he think of the equally overwhelming grotesqueness of the new buildings of today that dominate the inner quad? Balliol Philistinism all over: great and good as Balliol is, it has had no aesthetic guardian angel to improve its unattractive appearance. The only decent building Balliol has put up in our time is Holywell Manor, a modest and appealing adaptation.

The golden rule in architecture is proportion; the contemporary world has lost all sense of it, everything is beyond the human scale. The delightful domestic architecture at Blackwell's end of the Broad was destroyed to make way for the elephantine New Bodleian, which should have been sited—as Sir Michael Sadler, a man of taste, urged—on the Holywell site, where now has risen the pseudo-Mexican pile of the new Law Library. The Parks have been overwhelmed by the vast complex of Science buildings. I am in favour of the expansion of Science, but not in the centre of Oxford: the huge complex should have been placed further out, on the salubrious slopes of Headington Park.

Again, the golden rule is simple: there should have been no further buildings within the constricted historic centre of Oxford at all, detracting from its beauty, and adding to the constriction, impossible traffic problems, and all. Magdalen has defaced one of the most beautiful scenes in the world with a third-rate building right on the approach to Magdalen Bridge. Pretty St Edmund Hall has ruined itself with ugly tall buildings, and a hall as big as Christ Church hall. Worcester, in its lovely gardens, has put up two third-rate buildings, one traditional, the other so-called 'modern': one can see the third-rateness of their creators staring out at one.

Once more the point is simple. In the 18th century which added such beautiful buildings to Oxford, they were provided by a small group of connoisseurs—Dean Aldrich, Dr. George Clarke, the Townshends—who were men of cultivated taste. Today the building programmes are decided by committees of people with no taste at all. There are exceptions, of course: the new Wolfson College by the best of academic architects, Powell and Moya, responsible also for distinguished buildings at Christ Church and Brasenose. It must be said that everywhere the women's colleges have done better: the women have better taste and are more conscientious about what they put up.

Freeman hated the expansion in his time, but it was inevitable and right that it should take place. I have been in favour of *some* expansion at all our universities, but not the headlong and ill-considered expansion that has created such problems, especially with revolting (and pampered) students. There certainly should be no further general expansion, only here and there where necessary with small institutions; certainly not at either Oxford or Cambridge, which have now gone beyond the optimum.

A main reason for expansive change in Freeman's time—along with the increase in the number of undergraduates—was the permission for Fellows of colleges to marry. He says that this, along with other causes, worked 'wholly to destroy' the old conception of a college. In his undergraduate days there had been 'no ladies' society in Oxford . . . it has surely had

something to do with that glorification of idleness, the amazing importance attached to mere amusements, which strikes one . . . as the most wonderful change of all.' He had a point, but as usual was exaggerating. He had never liked sports, detested the cult of athletics—ingeminating the word 'dangerous' again and again—and was a public campaigner against barbarous field-sports.

No doubt there was a great deal of idleness in late Victorian and Edwardian Oxford—the Oxford of *Zuleika Dobson*. But the fossilised Liberal reformer had at the back of his mind a conception of the old celibate, quasi-monastic life which had gone for ever. His ideal was the small college of his youth, where the unmarried Fellows lived like elder brothers with their juniors, the scholars. Forty years on he still wanted the Fellows to remain unmarried, to be the guardians and moral guides of the boys, while a university professoriate, with readers, etc did most of the teaching.

There was something in his idea of the rôle of the university professoriate as against the college tutors—some conflict of interest grew up between them—but he was quite out of date in thinking back to the monastic idea of college life of his youth. Personal prejudice entered in too. He considered that the professor should be 'the head of his subject' in the university, and there was something in that. He was mortified, however, by the fact that nobody came to his lectures as professor.

A personal factor is involved in this; for when Froude, five years Freeman's senior, at length came back to Oxford as his successor, his lectures were crowded. Sir Charles Oman—though an academic disciple of Freeman as against Froude—regarded Froude's brief tenure of the chair as 'the golden age of history lecturing.' Myself, I cannot think why this famous man should have consented to leave his London life and come back to be a mere professor in an Oxford which had disconsidered him all his life. He himself said, with his usual persiflage, that he couldn't resist coming back to Oxford in a respectable way, and that he hoped he would not be haunted by Freeman's ghost.

Some of Freeman's suggestions were reasonable enough and some of his strictures justified. Though wrong-headed—especially for a liberal reformer—in opposing the marriage of Fellows, he admitted that in the old days there had been too many Fellows consuming the colleges' substance without contributing much in return. He never considered that Fellows' wives might have something to contribute—when of course many of them today have more to contribute culturally than their committee-ridden husbands. It is a disadvantage when a college has too few junior Fellows, unmarried and resident, to help out with undergraduate life and provide a good 'mix'. But colleges do their best pragmatically to provide for that: *solvitur ambulando* is the motto upon which to proceed, and that provides the answer to his whole-hogging, and really ridiculous, condemnation of the work of the Commission, which was completely justified by its results.

The crux of the matter, of that Commission—as of others before and

since—and of Freeman's article is the relation between the colleges and the university. Everyone who knows, knows that the unique feature of Oxford and Cambridge life, and its most precious contribution to education and society (not of this country alone, either) is the collegiate system. Nobody in his senses would dream of damaging or weakening that in any way. The colleges are a part of the university and from most points of view, especially that of the undergraduates, its most vital organs. In our time we have the university as apart from the colleges, constantly growing, in size, finance and power—but not, providentially, too much at the expense of the colleges. The colleges at Oxford and Cambridge have grown too. Fundamentally, I should say, the colleges and the university work well together; some conflicts of interest and of demarcation are bound to be, but the two are complementary and pull well together. After all, almost all university officials, professors, heads of departments, readers etc. are college men.

Freeman, the old fossil, who had not much foresight for all his political liberalism, and no intuitive sense, could not see how things would work out. He was an Either-Or man, and condemned the basic idea of the Commission which was to work out so well: the idea of *combining* college and university functions, enabling them to cooperate and do a much better job together—as they certainly did. Balliol reforming ideas prevailed, and they were carried out with remarkable insight by that remarkable man, the sceptical, conservative Lord Salisbury.

We cannot here go into all the details; Sir Charles Mallet in his *History of the University* sums up the governing ideas of the Commission, and all Oxford can testify to its success. The work to be carried out was two-fold:

> the expansion of teaching, to include new subjects of study, and the expansion of the university, to include as far as possible poor men. To attach college revenues to university uses, to create out of college contributions a common university fund; to alter the terms, conditions and emoluments of university and college offices; to modify trusts, to suspend, convert, consolidate endowments; to create new buildings; to found new scholarships and prizes, to diminish the expenses of university life.

The ideas of Jowett's Balliol won out—hence Balliol's primacy for the next half-century or more, and its extraordinary record of achievement and success, not only within Oxford but far beyond its walls, its marvellous creative contribution in so many spheres (in spite of its aesthetic lack: I suppose one can't have everything, but I should have liked it to add that too). Mallet reminds us what was involved: the combination of university with college teaching as the obvious solution of *that* problem. Bring them together, Jowett urged. 'Make your professors members of colleges and useful to the students. Find them a place in the university system. Let college tutorships lead to university readerships and professorships as the natural prizes of a university career.' T. H. Green foresaw that the special function of professors would be to teach advanced post-graduate students. Hence research would need better endowment. And there should be a general matriculation for entry to the university to

maintain a proper level. (In my time the premier duke in the country, the late Duke of Norfolk, was refused entrance—a pity, I thought, though from the other end of the social scale.)

All this good work came about: and it came about on the basis of an empirical compromise, which turned out to be creative, capable of developing along those lines. Hence, for example, the two grandest developments I have pinpointed in my *Oxford in the History of the Nation*: the splendid achievement of the women's colleges (today an Oxford woman as Prime Minister of Great Britain, and another as Prime Minister of India!); secondly, the enormous development of science, with a prime contribution of Oxford to humanity in the development of penicillin and the universe of anti-biotics.

So Freeman was utterly wrong-headed to condemn the work of that Commission which set it all going as 'merciless havoc'. While his conclusion, 'No better form of deliverance could be thought of than a short Act of Parliament annulling the acts of the last Commissioners, and setting the university, its professors and its colleges, free'—can only be described as extremely silly. As silly as his life-long animus against Froude, whose superiority irritated him beyond endurance.

In an imperfect world I regard the university of Oxford as being as nearly perfect as any institution one could wish—along with Cambridge, of course, and perhaps the National Trust. Naturally I am prejudiced, for I owe everything to Oxford. However, in case I am thought besotted with prejudice and incapable of judgment, I suppose I must add a few criticisms.

Expansion has gone too far, and certainly should not go any further. Oxford is too crowded, too many people in the place, too many new buildings, too much traffic; the streets and pavements have become squalid (more so than tidier, cleaner Cambridge). Much of this is not due to the university, though the students, too, look squalid. I don't think that standards have been lowered, but there are too many examinations. The aim of a university life is not to examine and be examined, though one would think so to listen to the uninspiring conversation of most dons. Fancy wasting time and energy by inventing new examinations, like the B. Pol! Far more important that people should cultivate their minds, in literature, the arts, and sciences. Few of them are cultivated people (the women are better) but committee-men. The multiplication of committees is frightful, deadening to the soul. I suppose they provide an alibi for those people who don't like their subjects—there are some of those—or teaching. Some people must go in for Admin., but there are too many such, creating bogus posts, or at least posts without any real significance.

The same holds good—or, rather, depressingly—for lectures and research. Far too many lectures are given, many of them a waste of time and money, and a mis-direction of resources. When you look at the lecture lists, you see that the Boards of Faculties try, conscientiously but wastefully, to cover all aspects of a subject. Impossible anyway, and undesirable: more should be left to the initiative of the student. Then the

Boards will create more lectureships, more jobs, sometimes without purpose or significance, hardly defensible, when the lecturers should be educating themselves, becoming more cultivated people.

The same with research. Who wants research pursued by people barely educated, who should be going on instead with their education, or doing a useful job? I am not infrequently badgered by people for advice about some subject of research that is not worth going into—and certainly not by them. Everybody with standards knows how the spread of what is called education has led to a lowering of standards. One meets it everywhere, young people in offices who cannot spell or correct a proof, hardly read anything and have never heard of anything. I could give plenty of examples of that; but what's the use? Things are what they are in contemporary society, and the average person will never have much in the way of intellectual capabilities.

But that is no good reason for dragging those who are capable down to their level, which is what contemporary society everywhere aims at doing. So far, Oxford (with Cambridge) seems to have avoided being dragged down to the popular level; and I had better make no more criticisms, for fear of being taken to mean that it is less perfect than I suggested in this imperfect world.

As for Freeman, he is well and truly forgotten, dead as a dodo, or 19th century Liberalism. Froude, as a man of genius for transcending conventional boundaries and party lines, remains alive.

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[Dr. A. L. Rowse's latest book, *Memories of Men and Women*, (Eyre Methuen), contains glimpses of such people as Sir Winston Churchill, Nancy Astor, and Agatha Christie. Poet as well as historian, he has in the press his *Collected Poems* (Blackwood), *Eminent Elizabethans* (Macmillan), and *Shakespeare's Globe: his Moral and Intellectual Outlook* (Weidenfeld).]

# PROMISES: A CONTEMPORARY REVIEW OF THE ECONOMY

## by Nicholas R. Winterton, MP

BEFORE the present administration came to office, there was a clear view of the need to stop stopping production. The United Kingdom was promised an opportunity for economic growth by the Conservative Party, and we were also promised permission to work our way out of trouble. This was to take the form of reductions in disincentives and the abolishing of many damaging restrictions placed upon business by the last Socialist administration. Now, after twenty-one months in office, these promises are not being turned into reality quite fast enough.

We need to understand how it has come to pass that a Tory Government, dedicated to the cause of free enterprise, has caused the destruction of many manufacturing companies and presided over an increase in unemployment of some 700,000 persons. What is clearly visible, and plain for all to see, is the imposition of political ideology to camouflage the absence of a science of economics or even a constructive understanding of business. Our academics have failed in their task of putting together a body of data on this subject with which predictable results can be obtained by usage. Our universities have given us crackpot economics and no workable technology. When this failure is conjoined to confusion, orchestrated by high finance, we have an obscurity of complexity which enables the people and statesmen alike to be conned into the acceptance of highly dangerous policies.

On the one hand we are told that when each is given what he needs by those who have the ability to pay, we shall have paradise on earth. And on the other hand we have those who claim that money can be made to make money without the need for work. The socialist economic ideology is just as nutty as the monetarists' purist ideology.

We have the obfuscation of economics in order to place the subject beyond the reach of common sense and the common man and woman. One of the simplest and easiest subjects in the world is handed, lock, stock and barrel, over to the experts. The result is a disaster, because the buck no longer has a resting place. No one takes responsibility for the economic health of Britain, and our decline is blamed on God, on the weather, on the TUC or the Devil; on reds and yellows; on the past or the Opposition. Academics advise our statesmen and when things go wrong, which they always do, the academics claim that their advice is never taken.

The best remedy for this dilettante approach to economics is to take the subject apart and rebuild it for use. We must make the subject of economics comprehensible and usable for the man in the street. This will give the people protection and they can then demand the sane economic policies that will guarantee prosperity.

The first step to be taken in building a new subject, or in rebuilding an

old subject that has been corrupted, is to start with a definition of terms. So let us commence by defining the word economics. This is the social science that studies the production, the distribution and the consumption of commodities and services. It is interesting to observe that this definition alerts us to the fact that if there is no production then distribution and consumption can become irrelevant. A great deal of confusion comes from an almost fanatical preoccupation with consumption, i.e. the demand side of the economy. We can witness a strange belief in operation, which imagines that production is determined by consumption. Instead of realising that consumption can only occur if there is prior production, we get the wonderland concept of consuming in order to create production. We have Governments who will pour money into the economy to stimulate demand in order to initiate production; or we have Governments who restrain themselves from pouring money into the economy to stimulate production.

Production is the art of bringing into existence something created by human activity and exchanging this article for something valuable. However, a surplus is not production. Production is not complete until exchange has taken place. A factory that produces cars that will not sell is a factory without a product. Governments can become confused in the absence of a definition of product. The Central Statistical Office publishes production figures in terms of wages, profits, rents, etc., and a common agreement is established that people go to work to make money. Wages become the source of inflation, because wages are thought to be the product of work. We get a crazy belief that index-linked pensions are not inflationary, but index-linked wages are. It is believed that working causes inflation and the cessation of employment becomes the obvious remedy for inflation.

For our next definition we must take the means of exchange—money. The original system was barter. As the economy grew larger, a means of exchange was introduced. Money has been used in this way for several thousand years. It is crucial to the task of rebuilding the subject of economics to possess an accurate and reliable definition of money. 'Money is an idea backed with confidence'. Money itself is an idea, a product of mental activity. The confidence which gives money its value is derived from the knowledge that it represents the value of goods and services produced for exchange. Confidence in the idea that is money depends upon the willingness and the ability to produce goods and services that are needed and wanted and which will be exchanged on the world market. The subject of economics has been fouled up for want of this proper definition of money. Currency in all its forms is a symbol of money. Mistaking the symbol for the real thing is the cause of most of our troubles. Because money is an idea it is not a commodity, and when the symbol of the idea is mistaken for the idea and the symbol of money is used as a commodity, then the rot sets in.

The correct use of money starts with the correct issuance of currency. For any economy to be viable, expansion must be occurring and the

money supply must increase in exact conformity. Because any nation is controlled by those who issue its currency, it is essential in a democracy for the currency to be issued by the Government. At this point we come up against a huge problem which besets the Government of Britain today. Only a tiny fraction of the money supply in Britain is issued by the Government. Well over 90% of the money now in circulation has come into existence as a result of credit created by the banks. This money is too often in the form of ledger entry and is very far removed from the original idea that was money.

It is important to understand this anomaly because it then becomes obvious that the Government cannot control the money supply under existing legislation. Monetarism is a gimmick employed by Government to camouflage its inability to perform on its own the vital function of being the sole issuing authority for money. Attempts to tackle inflation by permitting the banks to charge excessively high rates of interest merely creates a boom in the lending business and ultimately increases inflation.

This is a good point at which to define the term inflation, which is a devaluation of the means of exchange when too much money is chasing too few goods. In Britain today, there is an apparency of a surfeit of goods, and this is caused by importing goods we cannot afford and borrowing money to pay for them. Britain is consuming more goods and services than she produces and is bridging the deficit with borrowed money, although the revenue from North Sea Oil is increasingly being used for this purpose.

In theory we have two options for tackling the problem of inflation; either cut consumption or increase production. The present Government imagines that there is a third option, that of reducing the money supply. This could work if the Government was in a position to prevent the purchase of goods and service beyond the limit of our productive capacity. But under existing circumstances, this is not a practical proposition, as is being clearly demonstrated at the present time. Knowing that inflation is too much money chasing too few goods, and using this knowledge to avoid being fooled by the apparency of ample goods, we can immediately recognise that increasing production of goods and services will rapidly end inflation. With low inflation, interest rates can fall and then the exchange rate will be self-correcting.

The only snag in this computation lies in the conviction of Government that it is impossible to initiate a rise in production in peacetime without taking extraordinary measures. The Government believes that money would have to be poured into industry in order to finance production. But the Government knows that this tactic will only create a surplus, which is worse than useless. Hence the importance of defining the term product. Or, alternatively , the Government believes that money would have to be poured into the pockets of purchasers in order to create a demand which in turn would stimulate production. This is a true example of wonderful welfare unworldliness. Why work, when a Government will fill your pockets to create a demand, and empty the pockets of the workers in

order to obtain the money for this welfare?

What the Government fails to recognise is its ability to stop stopping production. All that the Government needs to do to obtain a rapid increase in production, rapid economic growth, a rapid end to the recession and a rapid return to prosperity, is to start removing the barriers to production in the correct sequence. The foremost barrier to production in Britain today is a tax on earnings which punishes successful production and uses the proceeds to 'reward' enforced idleness and to service the loans incurred by the consequent lost production. An orderly withdrawal of the tax on earnings, preceded by a full explanation of the rationale for so doing, will create an immediate and dynamic impact on the economy.

It is calculated by the Treasury that this reform will cost £23 billion per annum. But what we need to look at is the cost in lost production of retaining this tax on earnings. This cost is in the region of £230 billion per annum. Or let us look at this another way. Production in Britain today is well below the level appropriate to a 2½ day week and is falling. A mere return to ordinary working conditions, i.e. a 5 day week and a return to full employment will more than double the gross domestic product (G.D.P.). This will mean that the percentage spent by the Government will fall from some 60% to 30% and with the Government only spending 30% of the G.D.P., there will be no further talk of savage cuts in Government spending.

We must try to visualise the dynamic effect of ending the tax on earnings so that we do not fall into the trap of believing that a status quo will remain and that the lost revenue must be raised by means of other taxes. The result of an orderly withdrawal of the tax on earnings will be a rising tide of prosperity that will lift all boats and fill the Treasury coffers in the process. Experiments have been carried out in industry to make certain that these predictions are accurate. It is safe for Mrs. Thatcher to carry out her Manifesto promises and permit Britain to regain her greatness. It is only too easy for our Iron Lady to become a Golden Madonna. Britain's recovery will not go unnoticed. Others will look to see how we cured ourselves of inflation, how we regained our Greatness and how we beat the recession. They will all eventually follow suit and that will be the end of the world trade recession and the dawn of a new age in which all mankind can flourish and prosper, in peace and harmony.

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[Nicholas R. Winterton has been Conservative member of Parliament for Macclesfield since 1971. He is Vice-Chairman of the Conservative Parliamentary Sports and Recreation Committee, Vice-Chairman of the All Party Anglo-Indonesian Parliamentary Group and a member of the Select Committee for Social Services.]

# RISK

## by J. H. Fremlin

FOR several hundred million people in the richer parts of the world, life is safer and more comfortable than it has been for any human being at any previous period in our history. Coincidentally with this there is more public concern about minor risks than ever before.

To some extent, this is to be expected on perfectly rational grounds. The practical elimination of death due to epidemic disease and a great reduction in deaths from several other causes naturally increases the importance of the causes of death that have not yet been controlled. Over the middle years of life the risk of death between say 15 and 45 has dropped within living memory to one per thousand or less per year. An additional one in a thousand risk per year would double this—which no-one could be expected to accept without some clear and positive reward for doing so. These same rational grounds might also explain what is to me the most extraordinary feature of the current public expressions of concern. This is the high proportion of young people who are involved. In previous times, when life was far less certain, it was the elderly and the parents of young children who worried most about hazards, whether traditional man-made hazards such as war or the less predictable risks of changing ways of life. The teenagers and young adults welcomed the new and were contemptuous of the anxious caution of the old, and at least the males of this age-range were usually more excited than frightened by the prospect of war.

It would indeed be reasonable for the young to concern themselves with minor risks now that major ones have gone, but I do not believe that reasonability in the reason. To understand public reactions we must first recognise another novel and extraordinary feature of these reactions. This is the great difference between the actual objective risk and the subjective perceived risk, which represents the extent of people's fear rather than the extent of their danger. In the past, although individuals often had exaggerated fears of some specific dangers, the general public assessment or perception of risk was not far wide of the mark. Now there seems to be hardly any relation at all between subjectively perceived and actual perils.

This is not merely an interesting sociological phenomenon. It is also of literally vital importance. It is impossible to avoid risk. It is, however, perfectly possible in many cases to choose which risk you should take. If you never get into an aeroplane you are unlikely to be killed in an air crash. If you never leave the house you cannot be run over on the road. Neither of these precautions, however, will prevent you from dying of something else; accidents in the home kill more people than any kind of accident outside it.

When a political choice has to be made by agreement, the smallest number of people will die if the actual risk of death is minimised, i.e. is

made as small as possible. The smallest number of people will be frightened if the perceived risk is made as small as possible. If the two risks coincide we can minimise both at once. If they differ we have to choose which to minimise. In crude terms, frightened people have votes and dead people do not, so it is likely that in practice the perceived risk is likely to be chosen. Concentration on the unreal perceived risk means reduced attention to the real risk. Accordingly, more people will die than need to die. This matters.

I will give a couple of examples to explain what I mean by actual and perceived risk. If you go for an hour's walk in the open there is a risk in the region of one in a thousand million million that you will be killed by a meteorite before you return. We can calculate this from the approximately known numbers of meteorites big enough to kill someone that strike the earth each year, plus the assumption that a meteorite is neither less likely nor more likely to hit the square foot you are standing on than any other square foot. This particular risk, though easily calculated, is clearly unimportant. The perceived risk, for the general public who have not read the paragraph above, is zero. This is not the same as the actual risk but the difference does not practically matter.

A more important example comes from the smoking of cigarettes. Continuous smoking of twenty a day is found in Britain to lead to an extra 20% chance of dying of lung cancer, with a small extra chance of bladder cancer and with a larger extra chance of dying of heart disease as a result. This is the average actual risk determined by observation. It does not depend on any theory of its mechanism; if you smoke you do have an extra risk. The subjectively assessed risk of death due to smoking varies with age, sex and many other factors. A few non-smokers see the danger as so large that they are seriously concerned if somebody else starts to smoke in the same room. Most smokers however perceive a risk a good deal smaller than the actual risk—perhaps by persuading themselves that they are in fact immune. A significant number claim to believe that there is no risk at all. Of course, some smokers must perceive a risk quite close to the actual risk but accept it for the pleasurable and soothing immediate reward provided by a cigarette. It is however doubtful if there are many of these outside the ranks of middle-class intellectuals. Presumably all cigarette smokers also increase the mutation rate of their reproductive cells, since nearly all cancer-producing chemicals also cause mutations, but the magnitude of this risk is not known. Since no figures have been published, the generally perceived risk is zero.

So far I have considered only individual risks to the individual. Now I want to discuss the more difficult question of large-scale risks resulting from events which are rare but which involve many individuals; the actual and perceived risks of such multiple accidents as jumbo-jet crashes, dam-bursts, earthquakes and especially large-scale nuclear accidents. At once there are two apparent irrationalities. The first is that a single event in which a large number of people are killed always arouses far more concern among the public than does the killing of much larger numbers

of people in ones or twos. The number of people in Britain (currently about 70 per year) killed on the pavements by motor vehicles over the last few years is greater than the number killed by major air crashes but it doesn't make the same headlines. The actual risk per passenger-mile (i.e. to the individual per mile travelled) in large aircraft on scheduled flights is about one per thousand million passenger miles, considerably less than the risk per mile of walking on the pavement. The perceived risk is greater.

The second irrationality is that the major accidents that are possible but have never happened are feared more than the major accidents that happen regularly. The outstanding contrast is that between the fear of major nuclear accidents and the fear of earthquakes. People have been killed by accidents in military plants in U.S.A. and Western Europe, although fewer have been so killed than in plants handling conventional explosives. Not one member of the public however has yet been killed by an accident in a civil nuclear power plant. The Three Mile Island accident may possibly be responsible for a death in twenty years or so, but more probably will cause no deaths at all. The actual risk of nuclear accidents therefore is purely theoretical and rather small. But the perceived risk is enormous. In terrible contrast is the extraordinary acceptance of the risk of earthquakes. Following recent catastrophes in Algeria and in Southern Italy, huge sums are being collected, not to help the sufferers to move elsewhere but to rebuild the shattered towns and villages ready for another disastrous quake in due course.

The wide difference between actual risk and perceived risk is a modern phenomenon. In earlier times the risks we perceived were not too far from the risks we actually ran. To support this statement I must go back a few million years. No animal can live without taking risks. A few million years ago, our ancestors were gregarious primates, living in troops of some tens or hundreds of individuals, living on a mixed diet of fruits, roots, birds' eggs and such small creatures as they could find and kill. Such a life had a number of risks of which the most obvious were the larger predators, especially lions and leopards. In foraging for food there was a risk from predators but this was less than the certain risk of starvation if no food was gathered. Obviously the risk accepted could not be too great. So everyone had to be quite good at evaluating quite small probabilities of death—and here I am speaking of the actual risks. Overestimate these risks and you starve. Underestimate them and you're eaten. At the same time, it could only have been the perceived risks on which the decisions were made. How could it be that our ancestors got their perceived risks quite close to the actual ones where we, with far more data, get them so impressively far away?

This was mainly because the recognised risks were a matter of experience, not understanding. Naturally, nobody ever calculated just how large the risks were. But in a primitive group of a few hundreds with a short expectation of life, every adult would necessarily have seen a lot of deaths and would have seen and remembered the effects of attempts

to prevent them. As a result a very good idea would be established of the dangers that might threaten other adults or children, together with nearly as good an idea of the risks of prevention or avoidance of specific dangers.

Now there is a vital condition for getting things even roughly right. This is that conditions and risks must remain constant both in kind and in magnitude for long enough, certainly for many generations, so that every important kind of danger could have been encountered enough times for the socially acceptable patterns of behaviour and training of the young to have been thoroughly tested by trial and error. The instinctive caution of all the higher animals when faced with something new would thus be maintained and accentuated. In a stable society living in a constant environment it is a very sound policy never to do anything for the first time. If something novel clearly *must* be done, let George do it while you whip the kids off to the other side of the hill. Something genuinely new naturally cannot be understood, and if something cannot be understood, reason is useless and to follow one's instinct for avoiding the new is the proper course to follow. I am sure that this inborn behaviour is still important today and may be the most important factor that leads the perceived risks of novel technologies to exceed so greatly the actual risks.

There can be no reasonable doubt that the biggest differences between perceived and actual risks at the present time arise in respect of the nuclear power industry. There are several parts of the nuclear fuel cycle where the discrepancy is large, notably concerning the transport of spent fuel elements and the risk of accident to power plants. It is not useful to discuss several things at once and would take too much space to discuss them all separately. I shall therefore limit myself strictly to the problem in which I think there is the greatest discrepancy, namely the final disposal of radioactive waste. Discussion of this specific problem is particularly valuable since disposal of such dangerous waste has never been done before and many people find it extremely difficult to understand how any trustworthy estimate whatever can be made of an unprecedented risk for which no practical experience has ever existed.

First we need the facts. It is widely believed that exposure to radiation from radioactive materials is a completely new danger and that we know very little about its effects. Neither of these beliefs is true. All life has always been exposed to radiation; when life began 3000 million years or so ago the radioactivity of the environment was greater than it is now. The natural background of radiation due to cosmic rays, to gamma rays from the soil, to the radioactive gas, radon, seeping out of the walls and floors of our houses and to the hundred grammes of naturally radioactive potassium in our own bodies add up to nearly a thousand times the average dose that we are getting from the nuclear power industry, including its fuel production and processing plants. The natural background of radiation may be responsible for 500-1,000 deaths from cancer each year, out of the hundred thousand which occur in Britain, and the nuclear power industry may be responsible for one.

We still have a lot to learn in detail but as a result of huge expenditure on research over several decades we understand the ways in which radiation injures us very much better than we understand the effects of the huge majority of chemical pollutants to which we are exposed. Since the cause is not novel the effects cannot be novel either. Indeed all of the ills produced by radiation can be and are produced by other factors. The most widely feared effect is cancer, which can be produced both by many industrial chemicals and by the products of burning fossil fuel (coal, gas and oil) as well as by radiation and by unknown 'natural causes' different from any of these. Even more feared by certain groups (for example, those who read the *Contemporary Review*) are the mutations—and these too are produced by fossil fuel burning and by ill-understood natural causes as well as by radiation.

The risks presented by radioactive wastes are not therefore qualitatively new, but if these wastes were not properly handled, it is certainly true to say that they could be quantitatively appalling.

The nuclear waste to be disposed of consists of the intensely radioactive residue from the uranium fuel of nuclear reactors after processing to remove as much as possible of the unburnt uranium and of the plutonium created in the reactors. As they leave the processing plant at Windscale, the radioactive residues are in solution together with a mixed bag of non-radioactive chemicals. The bulk of radioactive material is not remarkable; it consists of only a few tens of tons per year from all of Britain's reactors together with the residues from a few foreign reactors processed for countries which do not have processing plants of their own. The radioactive content however is stupendous; like all radioactivity it is steadily decaying away but the initial value will be of the order of thousands of millions of curies. Some of the active materials are more dangerous than others but a thousandth of one curie of the mixture could eventually cause death if accidentally swallowed. Per gramme of material this is of course nothing like so dangerous as the virus of rabies or the organism responsible for pneumonic plague, which can multiply in the bodies of their victims and be passed on to others, but it is a great deal more dangerous than such industrial chemicals as chlorine or even the newer war gases, and it is produced in tons, not grammes.

Storage on the site at Windscale for a few decades in cooled, double-lined and heavily screened stainless steel tanks presents no difficulty and involves less hazard than for example chlorine since the radioactive materials are not volatile (and hence cannot be carried by the wind) while chlorine is volatile and can be so carried for many miles. What worries people is that while most of the radioactivity will decay away in a few hundred years some will last for tens of thousands of years or even longer (Iodine-129 will have decayed only to half its present activity in 17 million years). One cannot envisage supervised tank storage for periods like this, so that the Windscale solution can only be a short-term one and the long-term problem remains. There are several possible plans for ultimate storage and the one that I shall describe may easily be super-

seded by some cheaper alternative with a similar or even smaller risk but the following plan has already been thoroughly investigated and all of the separate operations checked by experimental tests.

The first step is to mix (by remote control) the dried ground-up wastes with fine silica sand and other chemicals in a stainless steel canister and bring them to a white heat, when the whole mixture becomes a dark-coloured glass. This was done at Harwell on a small experimental scale over twenty years ago and has been done as a routine procedure in France for some years. Present British plans propose that the canisters should be nine feet high and eighteen inches in diameter, with a half-inch-thick wall, the top being sealed after the glass has been made. Such canisters would be stored in a dry underground chamber, still on the Windscale site, until the stage of final disposal. This envisages encasing each canister in four inches of lead surrounded by a quarter-of-an-inch of titanium, after which it would be put in permanent storage in a repository 1,500 feet underground in an old and geologically stable formation of rock, salt or clay. When the repository is full it would be sealed and left without further attention.

I shall not discuss the chance of the material being resurrected by terrorists, except to say that this would not be cost-effective. To fetch ten-ton weights that need remote handling 1,500 feet up a rubble-filled shaft with no lift and without anyone noticing is not a trivial task, and since it would be difficult to make your prospective victims eat the glass untreated you would have to dissolve it in a few tons of hydrofluoric acid. If you had a few tons of hydrofluoric acid you could kill a lot more people at once with far less trouble and without waiting 20-30 years for them to develop cancer and die. Dismissing this risk, therefore, the remaining risk from this point on is so small as to be difficult to estimate. Rock formations which have been stable for a hundred million years through several ice ages and considerable continental movements are likely to remain stable for a good many more million years. If so, the risk is zero. Earthquakes will doubtless occur—they occur about every 200 years in the region near Ayr in which trial drilling is being considered—but after some thousands of earthquakes in the past a few more are unlikely to disturb deep rocks which have not been disturbed by the earlier ones. Earthquakes certainly do not bring material up to the surface from 1,500 feet down!

The lead and titanium casing of the waste canisters is to guard against the bare possibility that sufficiently serious cracks might appear in deep rock to allow important amounts of ground water to reach the waste before its radioactivity has fallen to a negligible value. If the water is saline, as it might well be, this could corrode away unprotected stainless steel in a hundred years or so, and could eventually leach away the glass if a sufficiently rapid flow of water were maintained. Roman lead artefacts have lasted for 2,000 years buried in the silt under the warm, saline and actively stirred Mediterranean with little loss, the only effect being to corrode a layer less than a millimetre thick. At that rate the 100mm

casings of the waste canisters should last more than 200,000 years.

After this, absorbent material left for the purpose in the repository, and fulfilling the function of the Mediterranean silt in limiting oxygen access, together with adsorption by the rocks through which the water flows, will slow the rate of movement of radioactive atoms, most of which are likely to remain adsorbed till they decay. About 1,700 million years ago, a natural nuclear reactor started itself up in a rich sedimentary accumulation of uranium ore in Gabon and worked on and off for some hundreds of thousands of years. Very few of the radioactive fission products moved more than a metre or so from their point of origin before decaying—and no-one had surrounded it with specially chosen adsorptive materials.

In any other field of human endeavour, this would add up to saying that waste burial was safe. Full stop. But, the perceived risk being high, I will pursue the matter even further. It is difficult to be certain that the estimate of solution time of 200,000 years is right. If it is not, the true answer is more likely to be a million years or more, but just suppose it was only a few thousand. Then about half of the half ton of plutonium likely to be in an entire repository in the beginning, might eventually, over the next few tens of thousands of years, reach and mix with the surface water from which our drinking supply is drawn before it had decayed. A surprisingly large fraction, around 1/10,000, of the rainwater falling on this country is actually drunk so that about 25 grammes of plutonium could then be ingested.

I am discussing plutonium because it is still often said to be the most poisonous substance known to man. This is quite untrue. It is for example about 1,000 times less poisonous than radium which occurs to a tiny but measurable extent in a great many drinking waters, and which has been part of our environment since life began. The reason for plutonium's smaller toxicity is that practically all of any plutonium swallowed is excreted forthwith, only a part in 10,000 being adsorbed into the body, while radium is adsorbed quite efficiently. Accordingly, of our 25 grammes ingested by people, only 2½ milligrammes is going to be absorbed. It doesn't make much difference how this is shared out between the drinkers; if it is shared between ten times as many people each will have only a tenth of the risk of cancer resulting, so that whatever the distribution about 100 cancer deaths could result—spread over many thousands of years and many millions of people.

There are other radioactive elements in the wastes which are more easily absorbed than plutonium and which might kill several times more people—but still fewer than would be killed by wasp stings in the same period.

To achieve even this result, however, yet one more improbability is needed. We have to suppose that we still do not know how to prevent or cure cancer thousands of years in the future and that without water treatment or pollution control we could have as large a population density as we have now and a sufficiently high standard of health for nearly all

of us to live long enough to die of cancer. Few would do this in a society reduced to barbarism.

With all the improbabilities taken together, the actual risk appears to be barely distinguishable from zero and cannot even begin for hundreds of generations. (I first wrote '*is* barely distinguishable'. In doing so, however, I was neglecting the possibility of the active material being brought back to the surface by witchcraft. This is usually dismissed but the evidence for its existence is not zero and the opponents of waste burial would do better to concentrate on this than on the technological risks.)

Why then is the subjectively perceived risk so great that grandmothers in Ayr were genuinely and seriously afraid for their grandchildren and why do people talk of huge areas being made uninhabitable for centuries? My answer is that I do not know. Superficially there are some easy answers. It is because a large number of very competent propagandists are repeating over and over again the same set of unsubstantiated statements as though they were facts.

The nuclear industry is much at fault. It has published in detail the experimental basis for its contrary statements but does not repeat them over and over again and makes little attempt to present them in simple terms. It has not seen to it that the floods of worried letters to the newspapers get answered. It is true that many people would not understand the necessarily technical answers. But some people would; what everyone understands is that there hasn't been an answer.

A natural fear of nuclear bombs must be a contributing factor, but in the heyday of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament there was no such fear of nuclear power, which was indeed seen as a means of turning swords into ploughshares. There must be an increased risk of nuclear war, employing the vast existing bomb stocks, if the big powers become desperately short of energy as the oil runs short, and the tiniest increase of this risk must be more serious than any possible accidents in nuclear power systems.

Fear of novel risks may be a factor but an increasingly unlikely one. To primitive groups a novel risk which kills no-one for twenty years has stopped being a novel risk—in fact will not be regarded as a risk at all except by a few elderly people. Many of the active propagandists were small children when the first power reactors came into operation and should no longer be affected by so old a novelty. A general feeling of insecurity owing to the rapidity of technical change may be a factor, but again, why does this worry so many of the idealistic young?

It would be easy to believe in some form of conspiracy theory. Professor Hoyle has suggested that the USSR is responsible, with a view to weakening the West. Support by the British Communist party for the development of nuclear power makes this seem unlikely and the USSR could hardly expect to gain by increasing the risks that the West might be prepared to take to control the oil supplies of the Middle East.

A less unlikely candidate might be found among the major fossil fuel industries, especially the coal and oil industries in the USA, which might

desire to eliminate a growing competitor. The complete lack of discussion by the opponents of nuclear power of the thousands of cancers, mutations and broncho-pulmonary diseases produced by the burning of fossil fuels is consistent with this hypothesis; and the rapid increase in anti-nuclear propaganda coincidental with the time when the oil prices went up and made electricity from nuclear sources cheaper than from oil fits the hypothesis. There have been reports from USA of 'oil moles' being established in areas listed as suitable sites for nuclear power stations sufficiently in advance to give them adequate residential qualifications to arouse or lead local opposition when planning-permission for actual building was sought. I know of no firm evidence for this however and the risk of detection would be a serious deterrent.

There is a real possibility that the effects of an organised conspiracy could be mimicked without any organised activity at all. Several highly undistinguished nuclear scientists and engineers have written best-sellers magnifying the dangers of nuclear power, inventing non-existent hazards such as the 'hot particle' hypothesis and producing misunderstood statistics of inadequate samples to show impossibly large effects of minor radiation doses. The cash reward for such books must be well beyond anything that could have been earned by the average industrial scientist and the side-benefits of fame and popularity are not negligible. Without any conspiracy the success of one such book encourages the writing of others—and two really or apparently independent books have more than twice the impact of one.

Whether or not any or all of these are the cause of the present unprecedented divergence between perceived and actual risk, something must be done to reduce it. The population explosion, the depletion of many important resources and the destruction of the natural world are real risks at the limit of our capacity to cope. We cannot afford to divert our efforts into fighting ghosts.

I would like to conclude by suggesting that a group of sociologists and modern historians should make a serious study of the origins of the divergence, and perhaps even propose some means of reducing it, even if a complete cure should be impossible.

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[Professor J. H. Fremlin was Professor of Applied Radioactivity at the University of Birmingham 1966-80. Now retired, he is Investigator of a Project entitled: 'Supervision of research on the application of the techniques of nuclear physics to medical diagnosis and therapy' financed by the Medical Research Council. Publications include Heath Risks from Low Level Radiation, *Ambio* (Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences 1980) and *Applications of Nuclear Physics* (The English Universities Press Ltd., 1964) among many others.]

## POEMS

### FEBRUARY

On the edge of nowhere:
mill waters sound,
a cormorant peers from a stone,
brown landscape in the background lurks,
as water slides into jade mossed rocks,
and a boat is led astray . . .
take my cold hand in yours
and don't look away.
Let's rest on the brink of nowhere.

JULIE WHITBY

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### INLAND VOYAGE

All day I ploughed
Behind a plodding horse
And under cloud
That held its gloomy course
As though forever westward bound.

The clay soil clung
Near ankle-high. The sweat
Acidly stung
What vision I could get
Beyond the furrow's heaving mound.

The Shire horse steamed
And, like a dripping roof,
Glossily gleamed;
And when each muddy hoof
Arose, it made a suckling sound.

Centuries old
Was this rough inland sea,
Charted through cold
Days of inclemency
By ships of sustenance well-found.

J. H. B. PEEL

# DIVORCE—A SOCIAL REVOLUTION?

## by Cecil Northcott

THE passing of the 1969 Divorce Bill opened up a new social revolution in Britain which now, a decade later, is beginning to be assessed. In particular a most welcome report, *Torn Lives?*, has been issued by an independent organisation, Order of Christian Unity (53 Victoria Street, London S.W.1. £2). The value of the report is its concentration on the effect of divorce on the homes and lives of the 200,000 children involved in the broken homes, divorced parents and unhappy separations coming out of the 170,000 divorce petitions now being filed each year. In 1968 the number was 54,000. The reason for the increase is mainly due, of course, to the ease with which a separation or divorce can now be obtained with the 'irretrievable breakdown' clause and the two years of living apart arranged. Divorce is no longer a stigma but a recognised event in modern life which can be organised without too much inconvenience to the parties concerned.

But nevertheless the tragedy is there, and its effect on the children of a broken marriage is a social and personal factor in modern life. The report assembles its evidence from reports provided by parents, teachers, social workers, probation officers and health visitors. It recognises that a divorce may be a civilised event in which the parties concerned have no bitterness but have a 'degree of charity, of tolerance, in a curious sense, of love which is rarely to be found even in happily married couples and the children have remained apparently unscarred by their parents' divorce'. Granted intelligent children there is a sense in which they can 'handle a family trauma' such as an impending divorce. One headmistress gives evidence of the influence for good exercised by children but concludes that 'in our experience the two most damaging situations are where the children are used as weapons between the parents. It seems better in this case for the separation to be made total. The other situation of the lone parent, or elderly parents of a lone child, over-protect it.'

The moment of separation is 'often distressing' but the headmistress points out that 'children are very resilient and will generally accept quickly a new situation provided that their place in it remains the same. Children can survive the most horrific experiences far better than too much fuss and overt concern.'

The report goes on to state that in its opinion the 'most serious effect of divorce is that a child generally becomes fatherless. This, particularly for boys, restricts the areas of their interests . . . it also makes life very hard for the mother and her anxiety may make her less able to maintain the stability of the home. Divorce also almost always reduces the money available to the children. Unless there is a dramatic drop in living standards this will probably not affect young children very much.'

The 'one parent family' is, in the report's opinion, a new factor in the

modern divorce pattern which calls for understanding and treatment from all the social forces involved in family welfare:

> The effect of children being left with one parent only can be profound, because they are likely to be fond of both parents, and are often pulled both ways and suffer tremendous stress . . . A high percentage of children from broken homes, where divorce is impending, or has taken place are seen at child guidance clinics as they may well become very disturbed by the atmosphere in which they are living. This disturbance can take the form of aggression, rudeness, spitefulness, general bad behaviour towards their peers and any adults with whom they come into contact. In spite of all this outward show of bravado, they are really frightened children and do not know how to cope with life.

The unhappiness in a home that has broken or is likely to do so have effects especially on young teenagers who listen to the verbal battles between their parents. 'Hearing one parent denigrating the other can cause a child to see the same faults in other adults of the same sex and gradually all confidence in adults could be eroded until they all appear as bad as each other. It is at times like these that he may fall prey to undesirable characters. In the case of a boy it may be a homosexual who will exploit him, and in the case of a girl it may be that she will slip into prostitution, or make an alliance with an undesirable male who will use her and then "ditch" her when he has had enough of her, often when she is pregnant. She may also be over influenced by a lesbian and find herself caught in a situation from which she cannot escape'.

The value of the report is its most useful summaries of the evidence that comes from heads of schools and from social workers and health visitors. The Headmaster of Lancing College sees the world of the divorced as creating what has become known as 'the Problem Children'. They are often used by either or both parents 'to annoy the other partner in the marriage. This creates in my experience the most emotional and psychological problems of all.' The problem child is often 'smothered with material goods as each parent tends to spoil the child in a vain attempt to compensate for the lack of a loving home community, resulting in a child who tries to find happiness and love through ephemeral pleasures of a particular group.'

Who then is most at risk among the children in a divorced situation? In the Headmaster of Lancing's opinion the child most at risk is 'aged 15 at the time of separation, where the separation is acrimonious and each parent uses the child to release the poison created by the situation, and who then over-compensates by material gifts and permissiveness, exhibiting very little real love.'

An important section of the report is contributed by Dr. Arthur Graham, a professional psychologist in the field of 'children in care' under various public authorities. Most of his young patients come from broken homes caused by broken marriages:

> Nothing can replace the security of a loving relationship with both parents. It is often not realised that parental problems quite quickly result in severe disturbance in the developing child. Failure to progress normally is common, evidenced by sleep disturbance, night terrors, bedwetting, soiling and speech disturbance. Regression to an earlier stage of development is common

Dr. Graham says that 'some experienced professionals hold firmly to the

view that children from an early age should be informed and consulted when their parents are contemplating ending their marriage. This action might well prevent final breakdown.' He also points to one of the crucial issues in the whole of the 'caring profession,' and that is the need for young married couples themselves to have guidance and practical help with their children. Thrust into early marriage, house-keeping, child bearing and child education couples, hardly in their twenties, are in great need themselves. It is one thing to deal with divorced people after the event; it is more important to prevent the event altogether.

The effects of divorce on the children of broken marriages is only now being studied with the care and expertise it demands. As the report points out, 'material generosity and verbal expressions of concern are too often a cover for emotional, educational and moral neglect. Parents tend to be too involved in their own self-fulfilment to think of their family as a whole'. This leads to the report's support for the recommendation of the Society of Conservative Lawyers that once a divorce petition has been filed the parties should appear before a judge in chambers to consider what arrangements are being made for the children. This elevation of the children's welfare would bring a new atmosphere to the proceedings in the divorce court, and might even begin moves toward reconciliation early in the life of the petition. As the report says 'it would give the judge an early opportunity to see if there was any possibility of reconciliation or conciliation between the parties.'

As a new social revolution the study of the effects of modern divorce proceedings have had little attention paid to them except by the lawyers who see them as a lucrative field for their skill. And as for special attention to the needs of children, work has hardly begun. This report is one of the few considered attempts by an unofficial group to accumulate evidence and to look at some of the consequences of the study. One of their recommendations is to the government, that there should be one minister and one ministry concerned with divorce for . . . 'the happiness and stability of our children means the future happiness of our country'. This is a first class report and as a piece of social observation it deserves the highest praise.

# GOING WEST: THEATRE IN CALIFORNIA

## by John Elsom

A FORTNIGHT spent in California, travelling from San Diego near the Mexican border to San Francisco for the American Theatre Critics convention, is just long enough to assemble a tattered Falstaffian army of first impressions. The very first was of Los Angeles airport, where I spent five jet-lagged hours losing my respect for American know-how. The place was packed with rush-hour commuters; and quarrelsome families dragged children and luggage across parking lots. Heathrow, by comparison, was a model of efficiency.

The second was of waste, of massive freeways speeding from nowhere to nowhere, flanked by motels and pizza parlours, as if the main spur to this civilisation was to get the hell out of here, wherever that 'here' might be. How could the theatre, or even life as we know it, survive in a place where even the churches are 'drive-in'?

But those impressions, as it quickly turned out, were deceptive; for what surprised me most about San Diego was its sheer, almost overwhelming, neighbourliness. It is split up into small communities, each with its own style and architecture, clustering around beaches or little canyons, where only the boom of the distant freeway reminds you that you are still in a city. Balbao Park, with its zoo, Globe Theatre and bundle of museums and art galleries, is a kind of playground for all these neighbourhoods, slap in the centre, with a dramatic life of its own. Kids wandering around can watch practising jugglers and clowns, hear folk-singers, or, most spectacularly, see the disco-rollers, with transistors stuffed into tight shorts, jiving and jitterbugging like mini-Travoltas.

San Diego, one of the largest cities in the States, *is* very community-conscious, to the point of provincialism. I took part in a 3-day long radio-phon, a marathon phone-in, in aid of the San Diego Symphony Orchestra, where citizens were encouraged to send donations in return for, it might cynically be supposed, the privilege of hearing their names and largesse advertised on the air. The target of 130,000 dollars was met, and over-taken, but not without much sweat, effort and hard sell. Meanwhile, the Mayor himself, a creditable song-and-dance man, was hoofing away in an open-air charity show to raise money to restore Balbao Park's historic buildings, of Spanish-American design, built in 1906 for the Exhibition, of solid stone and much less solid plaster and wire, the Hollywood version of stone.

In San Diego, conservation and capitalism have developed a wary respect for each other. No politician running for office can afford to forget the phrase, quality of life, and, in practical terms, this has meant a fresh concern for previously despised districts, such as the red-light area by the docks, where even the former prostitutes' shacks are being gentrified. Here Kit Goldman, well-known in San Diego as an actress-producer, has opened her new, chic, Gaslamp Quarter Theatre.

In comparison with Los Angeles or San Francisco, San Diego has comparatively conservative theatrical tastes. The Globe runs Shakespeare seasons of good repute (though it was closed when I was there); while the state-built Mission Playhouse seems likely to be leased to a management specialising in melodramas and popular musicals. Touring musicals visit San Diego; but the Gaslamp Quarter Theatre is looking for young, radically inclined audiences, though not bordering on the subversive. Miss Goldman's first production was of Thomas Babe's *Taken In Marriage*, a rather gloomy study of five women hanging around a church meeting hall for a wedding that had better not take place. It was a slightly uncertain start to the first season, dogged by teething troubles and Babe's usually lively dialogue sounded rather ponderous and predictable; but I was impressed by the support which Miss Goldman had managed in a short time to arouse, among audiences and subscribers, and, above all, in her acting team.

The model for the Gaslamp Quarter Theatre is not so much like our alternative or fringe theatre, but the little theatres of San Francisco. Unlike San Diego, San Francisco is a small, compact city, of a mere 700,000 inhabitants, with long theatrical traditions and the cosmopolitan, non-puritanical reputation for Californians which once Paris possessed for Edwardian Londoners. In the nineteenth century, flushed from the gold rush, San Francisco was a lucrative stop for star tours which began in Paris or London and ended in Australia. Famous actors and actresses, Bernhardt and Irving among them, would make considerable efforts to get to San Francisco (where they could charge 50 dollars for a stalls seat)—travelling by boat from New York to Florida, crossing the Panama neck by mule and up the coast (by boat again) to the Golden City. Unlike San Diego, San Francisco has developed its own way of subsidising the arts, through a flat-rate tax on hotel accommodation, which is in itself a recognition of the contribution which the theatre makes to its tourist trade.

The Mayor of San Francisco, Dianne Feinstein, had proclaimed the days of the convention, Live Theatre and Critics Days, another tribute of sorts; and there was a festival atmosphere, as apparently there usually is in San Francisco, with so much to see and do, the attention grabbed on all sides—by jazz musicians and performance artists in Union Square and Geary Street, by theatre companies with dangerous names like Burial Clay, by avant-garde and cause enthusiasms, and by the sheer beauty of the city itself with its cliff-like streets, sparkling bay and devil-may-care determination to try anything once. Pride of place in these convention days was taken by the American Conservatory Theatre, the largest repertory theatre on the West Coast, whose acting standards can be compared with those of the Royal Shakespeare Company.

Unlike the RSC, however, the ACT has a conservatoire attached, providing a formidable programme for its 50 or so students. The training sessions are exhausting, 5 different kinds of movement classes, 5 vocal courses, dance, mime, improvisation and method teaching, all of which

are reflected in the standards of the ACT productions, whose range of style is considerable. The three productions which I saw were admirable—a folksy, stylised *Ah, Wilderness!*, an ambitious collage of Hollywood cliches in Durang's *A History of American Film* which gave the company the opportunity to tap-dance and avoid collapsing pillars, and a rare chance to see Ghelderode's somewhat whimsical 1920s attack on totalitarianism, *Pantagleize*, with Raye Birk giving a brilliant performance as the innocent Chaplinesque clown.

The gap in the ACT approach was also, however, obvious—just as the conservatoire courses did not acknowledge anything which could be regarded as the academic approach, a blanket phrase to cover such disciplines as dramatic theory, criticism and philosophy, so the repertoire programmes veered away from problematic or challenging plays in the intellectual sense. The most *avant-garde* play in the programme was Sam Shepard's *Buried Child;* but since that had already won a Pulitzer prize and was moreover written by a local dramatist, it would have been more difficult for the ACT to avoid staging it than to do it. But the bland conservatism of the ACT programmes comprises less than half the story, for William Ball, the ACT Director, is someone who, like William Whitelaw, seems to like stirring up complacency. He was at pains to point out that the whole of the ACT organisation was a great big happy family, which subscribers were invited to join.

Knocking the unadventurous nature of the ACT is a favourite sport in San Francisco, as tilting at the National Theatre is here, but perhaps with less cause, for the ACT is not really trespassing on anyone else's patch. Surrounding the ACT's two theatres in Geary Street are many small companies, each pursuing its own brand of *avant-garde;* some devoted to causes (political, ethnic or sexist), others (like the Magic Theatre or the One Act) to promoting new plays, yet more to exploring certain aesthetic ideas, such as the borderlines between sculpture, theatre and music. San Francisco has not yet copped out of the 1960s, and experimentalism screams at you, on the hoardings and playbills, in the streets themselves.

But experimental may not be quite the right adjective. The San Francisco Mime Troupe, for example, is a unique company, and still a radical one, both in a political and technical sense; but it had developed its skills for park and open-air comic strip theatre beyond the experimental stage. Luis Valdes's Spanish-American company (though not based in San Francisco) has won the loyalty of the immigrant Mexican workers; and so prospered that it can send shows to Broadway (*Zoot Suit*) and build its own theatre, away in the wilds, out of touch with gringoland. In San Francisco itself, a former marine base, a collection of small buildings and outhouses, has been set aside for fringe and community companies, of which the Magic Theatre has strong affinities with the Bush Theatre in London and boasts Martin Esslin as its literary adviser and Shepard as its resident dramatist.

For such companies, experimentalism may seem too derogatory a word,

as if they had not quite discovered yet what they want to do; but in San Francisco, discovery is a *raison d'être* for some theatres who prefer to travel hopefully than to arrive. There is a quest for novelty, reflected in the flashing, quirky names of shows (*Beach Blanket Babylon Goes To The Stars,* the quintessential SF revue) and of companies *(Spaghetti Jam);* while the ambitiousness of certain groups such as Serpent Theatre, who like to turn familiar settings (hospitals, parking lots, gas stations) into existential nightmares, cannot be questioned.

The air of adventure is part of the excitement of San Francisco, an exciting city in itself; but if one were to summarise precisely what constitutes the nature of the experimentalism, to distinguish it, say, from the *avant-garde* in London, Paris or Warsaw, it would be necessary to describe two leading preoccupations, very Californian. On one level, there is a prevailing belief that the surfaces of life are controllable: I saw, for example, a fifty-year old woman with braces on her teeth, like a 12-year old. By changing your clothes, jobs, make-up or politics, you can somehow become a new person. In San Francisco, as elsewhere in California, the style is the man; and so much attention is given to style, to the outward show. Satirists have a field day, because there is so much to satirise—the typical dress of a business man, the typical family life, the typical street scene.

Side by side with his faith in externals, lies the contrary belief—that the real self is always being trapped by role-playing. If you break the *façades,* the trembling, vulnerable psyche shivers at each breath of cold air. There is much confessional theatre, from the gay liberation groups, the feminist organisations, all who believe that their inner needs are threatened by external pressures to conform. The introversion and the extroversion of San Francisco experimental theatre share a common tendency to make their points through fantastic exaggeration. John O'Keefe's *All Night Long* at the Magic Theatre presents a sit-com family locked into space-age problems, with a mutant child from another galaxy filling up the wall space behind the refrigerator. This is Snoo Wilson territory; and Snoo is one of the British dramatists particularly admired at the Magic Theatre.

Fantasy is notoriously hard to control: in a theatre where anything can happen, nothing seems worth doing. Fantasy leads to arbitrariness, and one valid criticism of San Francisco's experimental theatres is that they are too unselective, pursuing silly ideas and sensible ones with equal enthusiasm. Nevertheless, this view is one of which Bay Area critics and directors are all too aware, they express it themselves with ritual regularity; and the experimentalism in San Francisco is supported by a prevailing professionalism, undeterred by the low wages of actors and directors and the somewhat arbitrary funding policies of the City council. This professionalism—with the ACT and Berkeley Repertory Theatres offering conventional training, and the 99-seat theatres providing opportunities, with Los Angeles and the film industry around the corner to pick up talent—means that you can enter a small theatre reasonably confident that the production will be of good standard and not time-wasting. The little One-Act lunchtime theatre

provided what was for me the outstanding new play, John Olive's *Minnesota Moon*, an intelligent and witty study of two small-town youths, at the parting of their ways.

San Diego and San Francisco, the provincial resort and the cosmopolitan port, are like book-ends to California, contrasting but compelling in their different ways. What time forced me to neglect was the substance in the middle, Los Angeles, where my first impressions of urban chaos, grimy industrialism, were so sharply depressing. At the end of my stay, however, I returned there, briefly, for a weekend, just enough time to glimpse another side of the place—an opulent suburb by Newport Beach 40 minutes away, where the South Coast Repertory, built very much along British repertory lines, caters for commuter families with adventurously mixed programmes; and a shopping centre in the heart of the town, which was like a large theatre in itself. To enter it is startling, leaving the dusty, dirty main streets to find a consumer paradise, with palms, precincts, and layers of shops whose windows were themselves a kind of entertainment, with bizarre surrealistic juxtapositions—the camel and the candy bar, with the glamour of unreal models in skin-tight, sheen jeans, the grabbing friendliness and the extrovert efficiency. Capitalism itself is the true national theatre of California.

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[John Elsom will be writing about the New York theatre in the May issue of *Contemporary Review*. His new book, *Post-war British Theatre Criticism*, with drawings by Feliks Topolski, was published in January 1981 (Routledge & Kegan Paul £4.95).]

# QUARTERLY FILM REVIEW

## by James Morton

WHAT must be one of Burt Lancaster's last films—*Atlantic City*—has arrived for its London run. Since Lancaster, now nearly 70, must be coming to the end of his long and often distinguished career, it is perhaps a good time to look back and review the high points, particularly those performances he has realised when in the hands of a major director.

But first the film itself. Louis Malle has himself stayed on as one of the more enduring film makers from the French Novelle Vague of the early sixties, always one of the softer of the directors compared with say Chabrol. His recent work has become sanitised. In recent years he has done something of a white-wash job on *Incest (Soufflé Au Coeur);* The Nazi Occupation of France *(Lacombe Lucien); Under age Prostitution (La Petite*—English title *Pretty Baby)* and now he has done the same job on *Heroin dealing in Atlantic City.*

Lancaster plays a washed-up minor villain whose claim to fame is that for ten minutes he shared a cell with Bugsy Siegal many years earlier. Now he ekes out a living as a handy man for an elderly Betty Grable 'look alike' and a very small time numbers runner. At night he watches Susan Sarandon coat herself in lemon to remove the smell of fish from the Oyster Bar where she works. She is training to be a croupier and Lancaster shares his affections for her with the head of the School for would-be croupiers, Michele Piccoli, who has instilled into Ms Sarandon a love for the France she has never seen. This, of itself, may well reflect Louis Malle's passion for the France he has left to make films in America.

Into poor Susan's reasonably ordered life comes her quite desperate husband (Robert Duval) who has impregnated Susan's sister, Hollis MacLaren. Duval has stolen a quantity of cocaine from the Mafia in Philadelphia and has come to distribute it in Atlantic City. He annexes Lancaster as his assistant and there is a most charming scene in which each cons, or perhaps because of the drug suggestion one should say 'snows', the other about his past exploits. Duval ends up dead and Lancaster continues the connection, at the same time trying to fend off the younger generation of Mafia hoods.

The film has enormous charm and this is mainly due to Lancaster and Saradon. It really is thoroughly likeable and Malle's success is that, as with the other subjects, you end up thinking that incest, under-age prostitution, The Nazi Occupation of France and drug dealing, really are not very wrong anyway. It is perhaps an insidious charm because of this.

Burt Lancaster started his life in a circus troupe with Nick Cravat and it is something to be said for Lancaster that he never forgot Cravat and the early days. Cravat appears regularly in Lancaster's films, albeit in minor parts. Lancaster's first film was in fact a rather loose version of Hemingway's *The Killers* and his first few films were not noticeable for their great variety of expression. Indeed, in an early film the New York

Times described him as having the 'Blank faced aplomb of Tarzan'. Very soon, however, he had formed his own company and, although initially the films were not a success, his relationship with Ben Hecht became the first lasting action-dominated production company which, in fact, went a long way in itself to break up the Studio system with its star control. The early fifties showed Lancaster in what could be described as 'Actioners', *The Flame and the Arrow* (Cravat), *Ten Tall Men* (The French Foreign Legion), *The Crimson Pirate* (Cravat again) and *Vengeance Valley,* but there were signs in his career by this time that Lancaster was not all teeth and muscles. He played Sgt. Walden in the immensely successful *From Here To Eternity* and found Robert Aldrich as a Director who was able to bring out the best in him in the film he made with Gary Cooper, *Vera Cruz.*

Lancaster wanted in fact to be a director, but made only one film, a western, *The Kentuckian,* with Walter Matthau as the Villain. Seeing this again on Television the film is by no means as bad as was thought on its first release and indeed Lancaster, as he has so often done, brought a great deal of charm to the role of the father, trying to bring his son up in accordance with what he considered to be honourable and yet not quite understanding that the world outside this small concept was a far larger and more evil place.

In 1957 he made a film for which he will be perhaps most remembered, although it was by no means outstanding, *Gunfight at the O.K. Corral.* But immediately his talent was shown by the British Director Alexander MacKendrick who directed Lancaster in a marvellous little piece, *The Sweet Smell of Success,* in which Lancaster played a particularly unpleasant newsman with Tony Curtis, again showing far more acting ability than was usually credited to him, as his help-mate. Richard Brooks also got another fine performance as the charlatan evangelist in *Elmer Gantry* and it is fascinating to look back to see how many good parts Lancaster has made when one turns to his next success, Frankenheimer's *Bird Man of Alcatraz.*

He went to Italy to make what I think is, without question, his finest film, this time for Visconti. He has always seemed to me the physical embodiment of Don Tomaso, the failing Sicilian aristocrat who knows his life is changing, but is incapable of doing anything about it and indeed probably does not really want to. Lancaster is magnificent, from the early sequences when he spills coffee on his immaculate shirt front to the end of the film, when he has suffered a small heart attack through dancing too much with his favourite nephew's wife. He also made *Gruppo di Famiglia (Conversation Piece),* again for Visconti, which in many ways was similar to *Il Gattopardi (The Leopard)* with its theme of a Professor whose life is disrupted by new and unsolvable elements. And now we have *Atlantic City.*

Perhaps, from the critical point of view, the sadness in Lancaster's career is that he did not make more films for major directors and in fact made very few films for Latin directors, particularly in his younger days.

# LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

## RICHARD CROSSMAN'S BACKBENCH DIARIES

*The Backbench Diaries of Richard Crossman.* Edited by Janet Morgan. Hamish Hamilton and Jonathan Cape. £15.

Lady Sharp, Permanent Under-Secretary at Housing when Dick Crossman was her Minister, was asked recently what he would be remembered by and apparently replied: 'His diaries'. That is probably a true estimate. His transcendent skill with the written and spoken word, his prodigious energy, his life-enhancing qualities were never destined to find their fulfilment in a major book or lasting administrative achievement.

As a diarist he rates, however, with the brightest and best, which does not mean that many will wish to read every one of the thousand pages laid before us here. Sterner editing could have produced a more artistic result and perhaps, in a later edition, can still do so.

Up to a point, but only up to a point, Dick Crossman was clear-sighted about himself. He writes of Denis Healey: 'Denis Healey is really a very interesting character. He is a very true ex-Communist "beyond good and evil" and when I hear him arguing and constantly deliberately misconstruing people's words, I realise how irritating I myself must be in argument'.

When Dick entered Parliament in 1945, he was the outstanding young socialist of his generation. But by autumn 1952, after a clumsy performance at the Labour Party Conference, he reports: 'What one learnt of course is the intense suspicion with which I am viewed by my own supporters (in the Labour Party), a suspicion only equalled by the hatred of the other side.' That was too harsh a judgment. There is plenty of evidence in these diaries of warm relationships with M.P.s on all sides of the House.

The name 'Double Crossman' was a cheap sneer, but there was something in his personality that made it plausible. Knowing him well for many years, I am sure that he never deliberately deceived anybody. But he was extraordinarily unpredictable. If he said one thing today, it was assumed, no doubt unfairly, but with just a kernel of truth, that he would say something different perhaps the opposite tomorrow.

No doubt there was an element of accident in the fact that he was never offered any government appointment in the Attlee period. He would see it himself as the sacrifice he made for the cause of Israel. But that was not the whole truth, though his dedication to Israel was utterly sincere, then and later. The truth is that loyalty to persons was something he never really understood, unless one makes an exception for Nye Bevan. Dick was sharply critical about him and yet remained a fascinated disciple.

Dick no doubt saw his own highest loyalty as owed to truth. But the pursuit of truth involved in his case a dialectical path which few others could follow.

There is naturally a great deal about Hugh Gaitskell in this book. Hugh had been so insignificant at Winchester where Dick, somewhat younger, had been dominant. At New College Hugh just managed a First, whereas Dick was promised a Fellowship before he took his degree. But by the period covered in the Diaries, the tortoise has far outstripped the hare. The hare can never quite make out why.

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A percipient student reading these Diaries should understand why he was so much distrusted and so much loved—often by the same people at different times.

FRANK LONGFORD

## THE PROSTITUTE'S OUTLOOK

*Prostitutes, Our Life.* Edited by Claude Jaget. Falling Wall Press. £3.50.

Few people can remain silent on the subject of prostitutes. They are a different species; they are social pariahs and degrade womankind; they are sexual perverts; money is their sole motivation; they are in thraldom to pimps; the forces of law and order must waste inordinate proportions of their valuable time in trying to curb their nefarious activities.

They often come to a sticky end. And the high murder rate amongst prostitutes was the prime cause of their occupation of churches in various French cities in 1975. A national strike involving prostitutes was an unprecedented event in France or elsewhere. Huge media coverage ensued and lasted several weeks; there was considerable public support and the government was powerless to influence the situation. Finally, and not before time the 'mutes' in society had a chance to speak.

The timing of the strike was good. The Women's Liberation Movement was gaining ground all over the world. Now *par excellence* it seemed appropriate to conduct a massive educational campaign about prostitution—about the reasons for entering it, about the lifestyle in brothels and on the street, about the clients and the pay, about the effects of continuous police harassment, about the deficiencies and anachronisms of the laws in various countries. The strike achieved its immediate aim and the murder rate amongst prostitutes dropped precipitously in succeeding months. But even more importantly, prostitutes gained immeasurable confidence; they found that they could work together for a common objective; they had a notable amount of support from 'straight' women; for a short time at least their isolation melted and they became part of the community.

Much of this book is devoted to highly personalised accounts of the lives of six girls. One entered the sex industry following a disastrous marriage at the age of 16; another was in heavy and persistent debt; one had a perverted stepfather who maltreated her. One girl took up the game for purely commercial reasons and would brook no criticism *vis-à-vis* her choice of career; another rebelled after a happy but over-cloistered childhood; the sixth became pregnant on leaving school, could not marry and needed the money to support the child.

There is certainly an illuminating little book. That it would arouse intense feelings—of hostility, disgust, curiosity, compassion—is not in doubt. Yet it subserves a function that the myriad of specialised sociological, psychological and medical studies on prostitution have so far failed to do. Its readership will be eclectic; and surely in a world where information about everything is at a premium, it is right that this should be so.

JOHN A. LORAINE

## MIDSUMMER TRAGEDY IN THE PAMIRS

*Storm and Sorrow in the High Pamirs.* Robert W. Craig. Gollancz. £6.95.

Organised by the Soviet Mountaineering Federation, the 1974 Meet on the Soviet-Chinese border should have been a mass triumph for the 160 climbers from twelve nations including Britain. Earthquake followed by storms of ex-

treme ferocity turned it into tragedy with the loss of 15 lives, including eight Russian women on the 23,406 ft. Peak Lenin summit.

The ordeals endured among the snow peaks, glaciers, avalanches, overhanging crevasses are typified by that of the author, deputy leader of the 19 Americans taking part. Camping with three others for a final assault on Peak 19, he awoke to find his tent buried under an avalanche that left him with an air pocket of only four or five inches in front of his face. In panic fear that he was going to die, he called out to his tent-mate, Gary Ullin, some two feet away, but got no reply. He thought of his life, family, friends, and though the effort might use up the scant remaining oxygen, groped desperately for a knife in the knicker pocket under his head, to cut his way out. Then, when the air pocket was rapidly staling, he heard voices of the two from the other tent and was saved. Gary, a much-valued comrade, was dead. The three had to endure a second night of storm before Base could organise a helicopter drop and rescue team.

But the crucial, annihilating ordeal was that of the Soviet women on Peak Lenin. Warned by radio to descend quickly as a heavy storm impended, their leader, Elvira Shataeyeva, replied: 'We are strong. We are Soviet women. It is late and we are tired. We will camp here and go down to Razdalny tomorrow.' Fateful words for proud climbers equipped only with tents unfitted to withstand two nights' storm.

The ensuing requiem is in her radio voice to Base, dimmed by howling gale and her momentary incoherent hysteria as tents shattered, comrades died: 'We are holding on. We cannot dig in; we are too weak. We have had almost nothing to eat or drink for two days. The three girls are going rapidly. It is very sad here where it was once so beautiful.' . . . 'We will go down; there is nothing left for us here. They are all gone now. The last asked, "When will we see the flowers again?" The others earlier asked about the children—Now it is no use. We will go down.' . . . Finally: 'And now we will all die. We are very sorry. We tried but we could not. . . . Please forgive us. We love you. Goodbye.'

Mr. Craig presents the whole story coolly, factually, yet takes one deep into the experience. The conclusion seems to be that the Russians did not prepare adequately for such a contingency, the women's tents were faulty, the cult of their equality with men was over-stressed. Incidentally, we get a vivid idea of the wild terrain and its highly superstitious native people.

TREVOR ALLEN

## A NEW ASSESSMENT OF HENRY VI

*Henry VI.* Bertram Wolffe. Eyre Methuen. £19.95.

Perhaps the most neglected of all English kings Henry VI has assuredly received scant notice from students of the past; the author however has remedied such disregard by this scholarly and comprehensive biography. His task has not been easy because there is precious little intimate detail on which to base the story of Henry's life. He dismisses as a myth the traditional view of Henry as a Christ-like figure whose kingdom was not of this world; instead, this most shadowy of all the kings of England is brought to life through a study of his actions and the consequences thereof, producing a much more authentic figure.

When Henry V died in 1422 his son was a nine months old baby; thus there ensued fifteen years of minority rule in which power was in the hands of the royal council and Henry's brothers, Bedford and Gloucester. So well did they

rule that they were able to hand over an unimpaired and expanded inheritance to Henry. His personal rule from 1437 showed how he squandered this inheritance. His conduct of the French war was deplorable, leading to the loss of Normandy and Maine by 1450 and of Gascony three years later. It was the custom for medieval kings to lead their troops in battle but Henry VI never did; moreover he was completely outmanoeuvred diplomatically by the astute French king, Charles VII. There is little doubt that his inept handling of the French war was a primary cause of the fall of the House of Lancaster.

Between 1437 and 1450 Henry failed to maintain law and order; he allowed the royal power to be associated with faction which was positively harmful and led to popular risings such as Cade's Rebellion in 1450; and he grossly abused his wide powers of patronage. The intermittent fighting called the Wars of the Roses originated from the mismanagement and misgovernment of the nation's affairs at home and abroad by Henry in which the aristocratic enmities and struggles for power were generated and fostered, particularly by his stupid partiality for the unsuccessful Beauforts and for his distrust of York. He was both an incompetent and partisan king, and his deposition in 1461 was due to his own failings, not to the claims, ambitions, or rights of the supplanter, Edward IV.

The pick of the Lancastrian nobility was destroyed at Towton on Palm Sunday, 29 March, 1461; Henry, Queen Margaret, and the prince escaped into Scotland. The Yorkish lords had thus rescued the kingdom from the consequences of Henry's 'inanity' that most apt description of his predominant mental state, at least after 1455. This alone had rendered Edward IV's usurpation possible and desirable. When Henry crossed the border to Scotland in April, 1461 ten years of exile, concealment in England, captivity, and a brief nominal restoration to the throne in which he played no part, still lay ahead before his murder in the Tower on the night of 21-22 May, 1471. During the four years of freedom in Scotland and Northern England, Henry made no effort to win back the throne. From 1465 he was in the hands of Edward IV, safe only because his son, the Lancastrian heir, was still at large. But Prince Edward's death at Tewkesbury 1471 sealed his father's fate; he was done to death immediately his survival ceased to be of use to his enemies.

Clearly Dr. Wolffe by his careful and painstaking research has caused us to view Henry VI in an entirely different light. No more can we regard him as 'a man simple and upright, altogether fearing the Lord God and departing from evil'. Indeed he has veritably become the villain of the piece. Apart from his foundation of Eton College and King's College, Cambridge it would be virtually impossible to find anything worthy of admiration both in his character or career.

S. F. WOOLLEY

## IN KAFKA COUNTRY

*The World of Franz Kafka,* edited by J. P. Stern. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £9.95.

In *The World of Franz Kafka,* Professor J. P. Stern, an internationally valued critic and historian of modern German literature, brings together a number of essays, many of them newly written for this volume, on the life and work of one who is undeniably among the four or five first-rate novelists of this century. Kafka's importance lies in his depiction, with frightening precision, of the dilemma of modern man in search of an identity—perhaps even of a soul. The nature of his art and the subject of his concern have been variously interpreted by an ever-increasing number of discerning critics.

It must, however, always be remembered that a work of art is more than any one explanation of it. The new volume of Professor Stern has the special virtue of exhibiting, in its first section, the local and biographical background to Kafka's work, a groundwork that is of particular moment for a reasonable understanding of the novels and stories. Frank Carter writes vividly of Kafka's Prague at the beginning of the twentieth century, the end of the Habsburg Empire, showing forcibly how a Jewish boy, educated in German language and culture, sought in early manhood a Czech identity, whilst strongly motivated towards his ethnic and religious heritage. Allen Blunden gives a sharply defined chronology of his life in Prague from 1883 to his death in 1924, at the age of 41. This first section of the book brings home to the reader, as other critical works have less clearly done, the fact that a young man in that environment could not fail to be aware of political tensions from an early age. The second section, critical and interpretative, includes a distinguished survey of Kafka's writings as a whole by Martin Walser, a post-war German novelist, as well as notable essays by Frank Kermode and Walter Sokel. The third section contains fictions and fantasies inspired by Kafka, the most illuminating of these being Roy Fuller's 'A Normal Enough Dog', in which it is pointed out that Kafka's years of daily work in the Workman's Accident Insurance Institution must have bred in him at once a familiarity with, and a certain contempt for, the bureaucratic mind and its official phrases, both appearing readily in Kafka's character portrayals.

Frequently identified by commentators with some vast political theme, Kafka is thought to have prefigured twentieth century oligarchies, particularly the totalitarian regimes, as his contemporary, Nietzsche, might have done in a different focus, or later George Orwell. But a close reading of his novels, particularly of the last in the trilogy, *The Castle*, shows less of a social consciousness than of a desire to understand how an isolated person may perceive his place in an alien world full of similarly striving, helpless individuals. The frontiers of perception are Kafka's, and thus his 'hero's', main preoccupation. The central character, feeling his timid way into an unfamiliar community, encounters strange people whose lives, if circumscribed, appear to him to impinge with mysterious intent upon his own. These minor figures, even the woman he marries, seem to be functionaries, behaving like puppets at the behest of some nameless dignitary. Evil designs are not assumed, no hard-edged conspiracy is afoot: neutral in moral content, pragmatic in tone, the 'commands' issued by devious 'messengers' seem intended less to frustrate the hero's aspirations than to thwart his pursuit of useful knowledge. His land-survey of the Castle and surrounding countryside—the ostensible reason for his presence in the village—proceeds unhindered. But he is simply never to know why or by whom it was commissioned, to what intrinsic purpose it may be put or what its consequences might be.

Plainly, then, it has been tempting to critics to play decodifying games with such promising cryptograms, particularly as Kafka's style is itself both complex and compulsive to the reader. Symbolic meaning has been sought in both form and subject-matter. In the form—novel and short story—parable and fable predominate. His subject is an integral part of his form and it could be called the search for identity, the journey of self-discovery, the quest for truth or even bitterness at the futility of transient human life. To this extent, psychologists like Charles Neider could justifiably relate a Freudian explanation to Kafka's repressed childhood under a stern father—as, to a great extent, did Kafka himself. Even the fact that all three of his novels remain unfinished

could be seen as significant, notwithstanding the physical strains of his brief life. Marxist writers, too, have felt Kafka to be their own and Professor Stern quotes George Lukacs and Berthold Brecht in a chapter called 'Challenges and Protests': Lukacs sees him as 'in the family of the great writers of realism', because 'here content in its bare immediacy determines its own form—an aspect of the creative process' which places Kafka squarely within their ranks. Perhaps Roy Fuller's description of Kafka provides greater illumination than either psychologist or political theorist when he quotes Kafka's own words to his young colleague, Janouch: 'The poet is always much smaller and weaker than the social average. Therefore he feels the burden of existence much more intensely and strongly than other men. For him personally his song is only a scream. . . . He is not a giant, but only a more or less brightly plumaged bird in the cage of his existence'.

BETTY ABEL

## LITERATURE IN CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE

*Triumphs of the Imagination: Literature in Christian Perspective.* Leland Ryken. Inter-Varsity Press. £2.95.

If the popular view of the Structuralists who have recently been discovered in the bosom of the English Faculty at the University of Cambridge is correct, then there is no work more likely to be held up by them as an object of hatred, ridicule and contempt (all three) than this harmless, sincere and scholarly book, which explores the Christian (*not* merely 'religious') approach to literature. Although it will, in the main, attract only the reader who is avowedly a Christian in every aspect of his being, it may, nevertheless, be read more widely in the long tradition of apology for imaginative literature, at a time, moreover, when the Prime Minister of Britain is constrained to reassure her House that there is no policy of a demoting of the stature of the arts. A decade ago (Professor Ryken reminds us) a Gallup Poll indicated that 58 per cent. of Americans had never finished reading a book other than a textbook or the Bible.

Professor Ryken finds the arguments against literature, from Plato onwards, 'long-standing, widely held, and formidable.' A Christian reader may have special objections or aversions, and Professor Ryken is always concerned to reassure him, and to show that 'to explore the world of literature is to explore part of God's created reality'. There is no trace in the Bible of a negative attitude towards literature—even in St. Paul. The Bible itself (and here we touch a traditional area of Cambridge thought) should be studied as literature. Because the Bible teaches that God is the source of beauty, as well as truth, Professor Ryken goes as far as to say that, for a Christian, the pursuit of beauty is not an option, but an obligation. He feels that most Christian writers have underrated literary beauty, by which he means the whole broad range of artistic excellence. A love of great literature and a familiarity with it are an adornment of the mansion of the mind with noble furnishings. The Christian reader should distinguish the aesthetic from the moral and intellectual response, so as to be able unreservedly to affirm the value of non-Christian literature at the level of literary craftsmanship. Modern writing where it is pessimistic, nihilistic, or naturalistic, even pornographic, may cause a particular anxiety, but Professor Ryken feels that a Christian who is firm in his faith may encounter such challenges equably, while not going out of his way to confront what is truly depraved.

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Professor Ryken draws profitably and helpfully upon the writings of Matthew Arnold, T. S. Eliot, Dorothy Sayers, Herbert Read, C. S. Lewis, and, of course, Sir Philip Sidney. The plangent tones of Ruskin might have been heard in his discussion of the social utility of the arts when he affirms that 'If our society would uphold beauty as a value not to be violated, our cities would not be concrete jungles and our streams would not be polluted.' When he adopts the more abstruse parts of Northrop Frye's ideology, he may go beyond the comprehension of the common reader whom he wishes to reach. He dismisses W. H. Auden's statement that 'there can no more be a "Christian" art than there can be . . . a Christian diet', since in the long run the work of every writer shows a 'moral and intellectual bias' and that bias may be 'either in accord with, or antithetical to Christian belief.'

Whether Professor Ryken is discussing the approach of the Christian reader, the application of Christian thought to literary criticism, or the nature of Christian literature, his viewpoint, however traditional and Arnoldian, has a freshness and life-enhancing quality which can do nothing but good wherever it is read.

MOLLY TIBBS

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## SHORTER REVIEWS

**European Elections and British Politics** (Longman. £9.95, hardback: £4.95 paperback). This is a penetrating study by David Butler and David Marquand, directed mainly to the first British elections to the European Parliament on June 7, 1980. They also discuss the earlier history of the nominated parliament in relation particularly to British membership. There were the Conservative and Liberal members of Parliament dedicated to the promotion of the Assembly, and even some Labour anti-marketeers who were caught up in the same enthusiasm. Unlike the European Elections in the rest of the European Community and Northern Ireland, the United Kingdom elections were fought, of course, on the first-past-the-post method. This decision followed the free vote in the House of Commons as agreed in the Lib-Lab Pact. The alternative was the Regional List system, widely used on the Continent, but not advocated by the Liberal Party. 'Looking back, David Steel believed that if the Liberals had played their hand more ruthlessly they might have secured proportional representation'. This seems very unlikely. As the authors agree from their researches, the actual elections drew little interest from the general voting public. They were 'completely' overshadowed by the General Election a month before, and there were no hard issues affecting deeply the electorate. They were not choosing a government. 'In the European election,' the candidates 'were a chorus without a play. The Community had no government; support for the opposition to a Government could therefore play no part in the campaign. Nor was it a second referendum. Not even the most virulently anti-Market Labour candidate could plausibly argue that a vote for him would be a vote to leave the Community. Not even the most passionately 'European' Conservative or Liberal could convincingly argue that a victory for his party would change Britain's European destiny'. The Labour Party was, of course, then deeply divided upon the issue of leaving the Community. If the Party had been then committed to leaving, it is possible that they would have been

more successful in the election. The authors point out that 'many candidates were surprised, and in some cases even shocked, by the strength of the anti-Community feeling which they encountered'. The authors argue that 'few people in the parties or the media had really thought about the nature of a European election. On the whole they tried to make it like a low key Westminster election'. It would seem fair to conclude that the lack of real interest in the media, particularly the popular press, simply reflected the general public apathy. Press coverage, to any extent, of the election did not appeal to the average reader. The authors discuss the impact of the British European Members upon the work of the Parliament. They could often play a decisive part. This applies particularly to the 61 Conservative members unallied to any other substantial group.

This volume provides a vast amount of data and analysis relating to the European elections in Britain and, as such, is an invaluable reference book.

**The Story of Writing** (Studio Vista. £9.95). No one is better fitted than Donald Jackson to write this history of writing. He has an international reputation in calligraphy, and has inspired the modern revival in this art, particularly in the United States. He was Distinguished Visiting Professor of Art at California State University in 1976-77. Since 1964, he has been Scribe to H.M. Crown Office at the House of Lords, where he has been responsible for preparing the elaborate letters patent under the Great Seal. In this book, he starts with the early wall paintings, through the Sumerian cuneiform and Egyptian scripts eventually to the Roman and Arab alphabets. These very early scripts are dealt with shortly, and the most impressive part of the volume relates to making of the medieval illuminated manuscript books, followed by the early printed volumes, also frequently illuminated, from the time of Gutenberg in the fifteenth century. The colour illustrations to the text are a delight. Also, Mr. Jackson has some practical information upon the technique of making an illumination. He continues his historical survey to the introduction of the ball point pen 'which gives us the kind of linear mark that the stylus made on the ubiquitous wax tablet of classical and medieval times'. It is a volume superbly produced and of great interest.

**A Search for Peace and Justice** (Rex Collings. £10.50). For the last forty years one man, Michael Scott, has had a hand in promoting peace and non-violent movements in various parts of Africa and here he has collected, with the help of two editors, Paul Hare and Herbert Blumberg, descriptions of what happened. The range of Michael Scott's activity is remarkable varying from London's East End to the exile of the Kabaka of Uganda. The Kabaka story and its prelude to Amin is worth its place in this collection and so is the Cold Comfort Farm story if only as a sad commentary on what might have been in Rhodesia. The editors also give a resume of the philosophy of peace which lies behind Michael Scott's acivities. Many will disagree with him but he raises issues which need answering.

(C.N)

**Educational and Social Order** (George Allen & Unwin. £1.75). Bertrand Russell's thoughts on education and society were first published in Great Britain in 1932. The book has been republished on numerous occasions. The Unwin Paperback first published in 1977 has recently been re-issued. The study is of continuous interest against the changes in education during the last half century.

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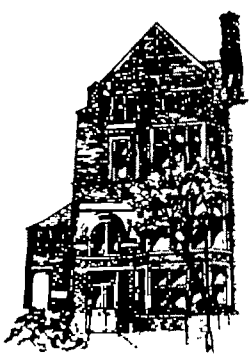

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# Contemporary Review

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## TURNCOATS AND U-TURNCOATS: OSCILLATIONS AROUND THE POLITICAL CENTRE

### by Trevor Smith

IN the immediate aftermath of the last General Election who would have thought that in less than two years the British political scene would be as exciting and confusing as it had been during the latter half of the 1970s? Those years, it will be recalled, witnessed a greater variety of thrills and spills than any other period in our post-war political history.

Of course it had its fair share of the sort of changes that are only to be expected over the medium term, though even these were more dramatic than usual—most noticeably in the different ways in which Mr. Heath and Mr. Thorpe departed from the leadership of their respective parties, while the immediate circumstances surrounding Sir Harold Wilson's retirement have still to be explained satisfactorily. Slightly less spectacularly the government performed a U-turn on its industrial strategy in conformity with recent custom, while Mr. Healey's thirteen budgets set a new record in the conduct of economic affairs. The problem of Ulster remained, becoming bloodier with the murder of prominent people including the British ambassador to Dublin and Mr. Airey Neave.

If, then, routine occurrence seemed somewhat 'hyped up', to use the the argot of the times, the idiosyncratic followed suit *pari passu*,—inflation, apparently, was not confined to matters of finance. Thus the Parliament which lasted from 1974 to 1979 was subjected to any number of novel experiences that ranged in varying degrees of importance and surprise.

Its first session opened with the bizarre reincarnation of Mr. Enoch Powell as an Ulster Unionist member, the return of thirteen Liberals and, outstripping this achievement, the election of eleven Scottish and three Welsh Nationalist M.Ps. Subsequent sessions were to see the creation of a breakaway Scottish Labour Party (consisting of two ex-Labour M.Ps), the introduction of referendums to sound out opinion first on the Common Market and later on the question of Celtic devolution, the formation of a Lib-Lab pact that endured for some eighteen months, and the defection of Mr. Prentice from the Labour benches to join those of the Tories. The much vaunted Social Contract between the T.U.C. and the Government, which had undoubtedly been an electoral asset in 1974, disintegrated into a rash of strikes culminating in a 'winter of discontent' in the final session of the Parliament. Other ingredients adding to the

drama of public life came from the Stonehouse affair, the revelations of Mr. Norman Scott and the Poulson scandal.

It is not surprising that the electorate responded to these highly charged circumstances with unprecedented and seemingly endemic bouts of feverishness; by-elections and pollsters recorded massive and rapid changes in the mood of voters. This new level of volatility was one of the factors which helped to trigger off a more ideological stance on the part of some senior Conservative and Labour politicians, Sir Keith Joseph and Mr. Tony Benn being the most prominent, in an attempt to induce a return to a greater measure of electoral stability. It also helped to promote their views within the major parties leading on the one hand to Mrs. Thatcher's victory for the Tory leadership and the subsequent ascendancy of Josephite thinking, and on the other to the growing influence of the Benn viewpoint inside the Labour party. The emphasis on a more distinctive ideological approach seems to be most popular with a party in opposition; in government, whether through a collective loss of nerve or because of the imperatives of circumstance (after many test cases it is *still* not clear which is the relatively more important), pragmatism seems inevitably to triumph over principle.

The resurgence of ideology meant the abandonment of consensual technocracy that had been the main legacy of the wartime coalition. This had owed much to the genius of Keynes and Beveridge and its essence was encapsulated in the term 'Butskellism'. Until the mid 1970s it constituted the primary thrust or theme of mainstream British politics, reaching its apotheosis in the successive advent of those clever scholarship boys Harold Wilson and Edward Heath to the premiership. Though at a discount over the past half a dozen years or so it had, and retains, a powerful and attractive political symbolism. It implies harmony and expertise as opposed to disputation and confrontation; it narrows the parameters of political debate. For these reasons, then, consensual technocracy can be made to appeal to a mass audience whose characteristics it has itself helped to mould; disaffected and generally apathetic, a present day electorate can be lulled into supporting one or other version of the middle way ('you've never had it so good' in 1959 or 'the white heat of the technological revolution' in 1964) when some promise in an improvement in material conditions appears plausible, but which otherwise is fickle in the extreme and almost always votes the incumbents out of office be it at the national or local government level. An electorate, the bulk of which has been nurtured on a diet of consensual technocracy, presents a particular fascination for the student who observes it and a considerable challenge to the politician seeking to mobilise it.

As with the selling of consumer goods, so it is with the political product. To say this is not to detract in any way from the role played by pollsters, advertising agencies and other such professional manipulators of opinion for, at bottom, it is the ambitious politicians who quite properly seeks to differentiate his approach—his 'product' if you like—from those offered by others. Individual ambition, in politics as elsewhere, neces-

sitates cutting a dash or otherwise making oneself conspicuous; political imagination and ingenuity must contrive to make the approach of the individual or group of like-minded individuals distinctive from those of his predecessors or contemporaries within his own party as well as from his rivals in other parties. Apart from any other realities of the situation, this simple fact provides reason enough why attempts are currently being made to reassert the politics of consensus in an effort to revitalise and then to recapture the middle ground, thereby mobilising consent around the old formula suitably tarted up. In other words, if the present holders gained office by emphasising ideology, there may be something to be said for those aspiring to overthrow or succeed them to de-emphasise it.

Again, this is not to denigrate modern politicians by attributing unwarranted cynicism to them, nor indeed is it to adopt an unduly disparaging view of the political process, but it is to argue the obvious point that the successful assertion and application of ideals or—less loftily—programmes depends upon catching the tide at the right time and in the right season. Mrs. Thatcher and her allies achieved precisely this in winning over both their party and the electorate to the need for implementing their more ideologically inspired set of policies. It remains to be seen whether in its turn the proposed alliance of Liberals and Social Democrats can be equally adroit and, judging the matter in a quite agnostic sense, deservedly lucky.

The formula of consensual technocracy resulted from, and continued to sustain for two decades, the so-called two party system: the issue in the next three years or so will be to discover or decide whether it is *the formula* or *the system* that is the more important. Since 1945, the system has won through, with the possible exception of the last Parliament. Numerous attempts have been made either to reform or to break the system. During his leadership, for example, the late Hugh Gaitskell endeavoured to re-fashion the Labour party. In its policies he hoped it would be similar in outlook to that of the American Democratic party as led by John Kennedy or, as his latter-day adherents would now say, the West German SPD as led by Helmut Schmidt; while in its constitution he hoped it would be less dependent upon and entangled with the trade unions. Concurrent with this exercise was Mr. Jo Grimond's attempt, as the Liberal Leader, to bring about a re-alignment of the Left in British politics, by which was meant a re-grouping of the moderate and radical elements from Labour (i.e. excluding what in those days was regarded as the Morrisonian, bureaucratic right wing and the full-blooded, sometimes fellow-travelling left-wing) with the Liberals. The Grimond plan implied a multi-party system, comprising Tories, Radicals and Socialists. Both schemes failed: the first because of Gaitskell's early death, and the second because the time was not ripe in either the revisionist Labour mind or in the mind of the populace and the system therefore was not put to the test.

Both before and since these attempts, which were undertaken immediately following the 1959 election when the Conservatives were returned

to office for the third successive time, a variety of individuals have felt moved to make their particular protests against the system and/or their party of origin. Some, like Sir Hartley Shawcross and Sir Edward Boyle, retired from party politics, though not from public life. Others, like Messrs. Anthony Nutting and Brian Walden, left Parliament altogether. Or, again, a few ostentatiously changed parties: Mr. Dingle Foot and Lady Megan Lloyd-George deserted the Liberals and became Labour M.Ps.; Mr. Reg Prentice and Mr. Aidan Crawley left the Labour party and were later adopted for winnable Conservative seats—though in this category Mr. Ivor Thomas and Mr. Alan Brown were less lucky. They crossed the floor of the Commons and joined Tories but were not rewarded for their pains with safe seats.

More interesting than any of the party turncoats were the cases of two Labour dissidents who actually managed to hold on to their seats—at least for one more general election. Mr. Dick Taverne, a former junior minister, simultaneously resigned from the Labour party and from the Commons and fought the ensuing by-election in 1973 which he won as a Social Democrat; he held Lincoln again in February 1974 but lost it in the election called eight months later. In similar fashion Mr. Eddie Milne, having failed to be readopted by his constituency party at Blyth, managed to hold the seat standing as an Independent Labour candidate in the February election but could not repeat his success later in the year.

The Taverne case, and to a lesser extent that of Milne, pointed to the fact that while constituents might give a dissident sitting M.P. sympathetic support for one election this would not be extended on a second occasion: the system proves too strong.

It is this lesson which has been taken to heart by the recently formed 'Gang of Four', consisting of Mr. Roy Jenkins, Dr. David Owen, Mr. William Rodgers and Mrs. Shirley Williams. As career politicians, all of whom have held one or more Cabinet portfolios, they have no intention of operating on an individual basis in a foolhardy attempt to bust the system. That way, as history shows, the lone crusader gets picked off in the sniper fire. Together with—at the latest count at the time of writing—ten other ex-Labour, but sitting, M.Ps., they propose to make their assault on the system in a collective manner. It is clearly the most serious threat yet to be mounted, at least so far as England is concerned, for the Nationalists' electoral achievement in October 1974 threatened for a time not merely the party system but also brought into question the future of the *United* Kingdom itself.

In many ways the creation of a Council for Social Democracy as a prelude initially to the formation of a separate grouping in Parliament and ultimately to the foundation of a fully-fledged political party with a nation-wide organisation has been a long time in the making and its appearance is by no means unexpected. The interesting point is why its gestation was of more than elephantine dimensions.

The tension between Gaitskellite revisionists and Bevanite fundamen-

talists which surfaced during the 1950s merely reflected the fact, as Professor Samuel Beer pointed out long ago, that the original 1919 programme of the Labour Party had been implemented in all essentials by the 1945 Labour government and nothing, which both sections of the party at least could agree on, has emerged subsequently to replace it. It was Sir Harold Wilson's genius as a party manager, if nothing else, that as leader he managed, unlike either his predecessor or his successors, to maintain some semblance of party unity in the face of an intrinsically irreconcilable ideological division of opinion. The fact that they were in office at the time, coupled with the choice of Mr. Callaghan as Prime Minister which was acceptable to them, staved off any breakaway thoughts on the part of the Social Democrats. However, the victory of Mr. Foot in the recent leadership race and the increasing power of Mr. Benn and his followers to amend the constitution and policies of the Labour party on such matters as the mandatory re-selection of sitting M.Ps. by their constituency parties, the compilation of the manifesto and a union dominated electoral college for selecting the party's leader, as was demonstrated at the special conference held at Wembley last January, have all combined to precipitate the break.

The question to be asked is whether this is likely to mark the beginnings of a new and major departure in British politics or will it be another false dawn or flash in the pan (the choice of metaphor depends upon one's perspective) similar to a half dozen or so Liberal revivals or the more recent experience of the Scottish National Party.

Among the factors making for a successful bid by the Social Democrats is that the Labour party can be presented as being more leftist than at any other time since 1950. Against this, however, is the fact that the Conservatives used such scaremongering tactics in 1945 and came unstuck; why should anyone think a future Labour government will be any more extremist than those presided over by Attlee, Wilson or Callaghan? After all, and this is an additional counterpoint, Mr. Foot and Mr. Shore have combined speedily with leading moderates in the party like Mr. Hattersley who are pledged to reverse or dilute the constitutional decisions taken at Wembley: the U-turn is already starting. If it can help it, Labour will not let 1981 be a repetition of 1931 when Ramsay MacDonald split the party.

Then there is the psephological probability that the Social Democrats will attract a disproportionate number of erstwhile Conservative voters relative to Labour ones, thereby harming Tory prospects and enhancing those of Labour. Mrs. Thatcher and her advisers will be fully appraised of this danger which is why she has already attacked the policies contained in the Gang of Four's Limehouse Declaration as merely being a slower acting version of the poison offered by the Labour party. More significantly, the Tories have recently and abruptly reneged on their own policies to such an extent that while Mrs. Thatcher may soldier on, Thatcherism is dead. Bailing out the British Steel Corporation and British Leyland to the degree it has, coupled with total capitulation to the National Union of Mineworkers in the face of its pay claim backed by

strike action, has destroyed the present government's credibility. This, it may be argued, strengthens the Social Democrats' case for a more pragmatic and consensual approach to industrial and economic affairs. But Mrs. Thatcher, or her successor from among the Tory 'wets', has two years in which to continue the U-turn begun in February which is now the only way left to restore the Conservative's credibility, at least for this time round. The political centre is going to be very over-crowded come the next election.

It is obvious that the Social Democrats' best chance is to enter into an alliance with the Liberals. On their main planks of policy the two are very close, agreeing on membership of the EEC, the need for an incomes policy, proportional representation, workers' participation, the decentralisation of governmental power and other such familiar items. Whether, in any objective sense, these policies will be any more relevant to the nation's problems than those, probably by then very similar ones, being offered by the two main parties, is difficult for anyone to assess, but at least they will have the advantage of being presented by a new alliance. Sheer novelty will help the presentation as will the popularity of Mr. Steel and Mrs. Williams, and both factors will combine to make for favourable treatment in the press and television.

In another respect, too, the two groups seem complementary. The Social Democrats have had experience of high ministerial office, while the Liberals possess the organisational ability and experience of starting from scratch in a constituency. All the current Liberal M.Ps. have had to win their own seats from one of the other parties. It was just this sort of practical experience which led both Mr. Mugabe and Mr. Nkomo to have Liberals advising on campaign tactics in the general election in Zimbabwe.

This complementary quality of the two parties, however, may also provide grounds for misunderstanding and incompatibility at the local if not national level. Because they come together with very different political backgrounds, the corporate psychology of the two are quite different. The Social Democrats are inevitably centrally and nationally oriented, however much they proclaim their new faith in decentralist policies. They are among the political 'fat cats' who have been used to chauffeured limousines, red despatch boxes, civil service briefings, intergovernmental meetings and all the other trappings of ministerial office. It is a whole world away from that inhabited by Liberal M.Ps. who necessarily are primarily concerned with parochial matters; they are good constituency back benchers *par excellence.* It is probably also true that Liberal rank-and-file activists are more constituency-bound than are their counterparts in the main parties. They will not readily surrender their sovereignty and stand their candidates down in favour of some Johnny-Come-Lately Social Democrat, particularly if the Liberals perform relatively well in the forthcoming municipal elections. How easily Mr. Steel can persuade his constituency parties to fall into line on the details of a nationally negotiated deal will depend whether or not the Social

Democrats endorse the Liberal local government candidates in May and how many parliamentary seats Mr. Jenkins & Co. intend to fight at the next election.

Pre-election pacts are much more difficult to tie up than are post-election coalitions. It will take considerable political skill to form an alliance which will maintain optimal electoral differentiation between the two parties yet achieve harmony at the grassroots.

The two party system may still manage to put the squeeze on the minor parties at the next election. Certainly the U-turncoats will try to outflank the turncoats. But if the former fail in their aims, which is as likely a prediction as any given the volatile nature of the electorate, the Scottish Nationalists may well benefit as much as an alliance of the radical centre. Thus, while all the indicators are set fair for a return to the old formula of consensual technocracy whatever the outcome of the next election, the two party system which appeared to revive so strongly in 1979 may conceivably dissolve into a multiplicity of parties and factions reminiscent of parliamentary life in the late eighteenth century. Sir Lewis Namier! 'thou shouldst be living at this hour: England (or more accurately political science) hath need of thee.'

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[Trevor Smith is Head of the Department of Political Studies at Queen Mary College, University of London and is currently Dean of the Social Studies Faculty. He is a director of the Rowntree Social Service Trust Ltd. which is the largest independent source of political finance in Britain. He broadcasts regularly on the B.B.C. World Service and Radio 4's programme *The World Tonight.* A revised, soft back edition of his latest book *The Politics of the Corporate Economy* is to be published by Martin Robertson in September, 1981.]

# THE AGE OF THE REFUGEE

## by Keith D. Suter

ADAM and Eve, when expelled from the Garden of Eden, were the world's first refugees. The international community has not made much progress since their time in finding suitable ways of caring for refugees. In fact the refugee situation is now getting worse each year. We are living in the age of the refugee.

It is almost impossible to provide accurate figures for any refugee location. In 1945, immediately following the end of World War II, it was estimated that there were 11 million refugees and displaced persons. By 1956 it was claimed that 'the ocean has been drained'. But by the beginning of 1980 it was estimated that the total was around 11-13 million—and getting worse. Indo-China is the best known source and location of refugees. But (to give a few more examples) there are 250,000 Ethiopians in the Sudan, 125,000 Angolans in Zaire, 40,000 Rhodesian Africans in Zambia, 200,000 Ethiopians in Somalia, 10,000 Soviets in Italy, 350,000 Palestinians on the Gaza Strip, 212,000 Palestinians in Lebanon, 200,000 Palestinians in Syria, 700,000 Palestinians in Jordan. The list seems endless. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, for example, has resulted in a flood of people going into Pakistan.

There are four main reasons for this frightening picture. First, since World War II there have been about 130 major civil and international conflicts. Although peace breaks out occasionally, as in Vietnam in May 1975, countries are often soon plunged back into conflicts. To look at the world from the cosy confines of comfortable western countries like Britain and Australia is to get a distorted view of what has been one of the most brutal periods in (say) post-Middle Ages international history.

Contemporary conflicts are now more destructive than ever before (except for deliberate 'scorched earth' operations). The advent of nuclear weapons has upgraded our notion of what is a 'small' conventional weapon. Bombing tonnage in the Korean War exceeded all tonnage dropped by the Allies in the Pacific in World War II. During the 1967 'Six Day' Middle East War more tanks were committed to battle than by the Allies, Germans and Italians at the 12 day battle of El Alamein in 1942. Between July 1965 and December 1967 alone more bomb tonnage was dropped on Vietnam than was dropped by the Allies on Europe during all of World War II.

Military campaigns are now often more intensive and longer than in the 19th century, when troops were hindered by environmental factors (European winter campaigns were almost non-existent) and transportation was slower. 'Quick' victories are rare and even when achieved (as with Israel in 1967) are often not permanent.

Political negotiations are now more protracted and less conclusive. 'Temporary' arrangements sometimes outlive the diplomats who negotiate them. The UN's Palestinian refugee programme was set up after the 1948

Arab-Israeli conflict and was scheduled to last three years. The work is continuing still, after three more conflicts (1956, 1967 and 1973) and 32 years. Indeed the office of UN High Commissioner for Refugees was originally seen as a temporary appointment—almost 30 years ago.

A 'refugee', according to the statute of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees is 'any person who is outside the country of his nationality or, if he has no nationality, the country of his former habitual residence, owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted by reason of his race, religion, nationality or political opinion, and is unable or, because of such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of the country of his nationality, or if he has no nationality, to return to the country of his former habitual residence'.

The second reason, then, for the growth of refugees is derived from the increased number of nations. In earlier ages, people fleeing persecution could run elsewhere in the nation, which was often by our standards an empire. Detection and arrest procedures were less sophisticated. Alternatively, transportation was less extensive and so persecutors and their victims took longer (if ever) to reach national frontiers. In short, refugees did not surface a century ago as often as they do now. A refugee nowadays can board an aircraft in Moscow and be in London within seven hours. Most nations are smaller now than, say, before 1939, when most of today's nations were then only parts of larger national areas, so that a person has a shorter journey before he encounters a national frontier. Post-independence periods for former colonies have often been turbulent. Some nations have simply split up (like the Congo and Pakistan-Bangladesh). Many others have had civil wars (like Nigeria-Biafra) or brutal rulers (like the Central African Empire, Uganda and Kampuchea). All this violence has resulted in refugees. Rhodesia may be yet another source.

Thirdly, improved mass media means that people are able to hear about apparently better living or political standards elsewhere. Whereas earlier generations often felt that they had no choice but to stay and try to survive, contemporary refugees are more willing to gamble. The foreign mass media (such as the BBC Overseas Service and Radio Australia) not only carry enticing stories of life elsewhere but report on recent fashions for fleeing which are of assistance in providing ideas for potential refugees.

Finally, there are, in this context, two other related factors: the rise of human rights non-governmental organisations and the increased immigration (for example: Melbourne in Australia is the third largest Greek city, there are more Maltese in Australia than in Malta, and the United States is the world's fifth largest Spanish-speaking nation). Both the organisations and migrants' relatives can be active lobbyists in pressing governments to permit people to flee their lands (such as the Soviet Union's Jews) and being granted refugee status in other countries.

International action for refugees began in a major way after World War I, when the Russian Revolution and the relocation of some of the war's European survivors (almost two million alone in the former case)

required extensive action. By 1923 nearly 400,000 Armenian refugees were scattered throughout the Middle East and Europe as a result of persecution in Asia Minor.

In 1921 the League of Nations reacted by appointing Dr. Fridtjof Nansen as High Commissioner for Russian Refugees: the first international civil servant to deal exclusively with refugee problems. The travel document issued to refugees in lieu of a passport became known as the 'Nansen Passport', thereby enabling refugees to move from one country to another. Fifty-four governments eventually agreed to accept the Nansen Passport with regard to Russian refugees and thirty-eight for Armenians. Since then, there has been an unbroken chain of international agencies for the protection of refugees. Each link in the chain has been only temporary and yet as one problem was resolved (with varying degrees of success) so a new link had to be created to deal with a new group of refugees. The United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) was established by forty-four nations in November 1943. UNRRA was replaced by the UN International Refugee Organisation (IRO). Owing to political problems, this had to be wound up.

In 1951 the Office of UN High Commissioner for Refugees was established to fill the gap created by the IRO's demise. The High Commissioner is elected by the UN General Assembly. There has been a high degree of continuity at the top: Dr. G. J. van Hueven Goedhart to 1956, Auguste Lindt, 1957-60, Felix Schnyder 1961-5, Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, 1966-77, Poul Hartling 1978-.

The UNHCR office provides three main services for refugees: protection, immediate relief, and finding a permanent solution. The UNHCR serves as the refugee's 'government' and offers international and diplomatic protection. It intervenes, if necessary, with governments to assist in obtaining asylum for refugees and ensures that they have the right to work, education for their children, social security and other basic essentials necessary for a normal existence. Also, food, clothing and medical supplies are provided by UNHCR for persons who leave their countries in considerable numbers—sometimes as many as 10,000 a day—because of political upheavals, wars or other emergency situations. Immediate relief is offered to spare the refugees the rigours of their plight. UNHCR is opposed to the continuation of immediate relief because psychologically it is wrong to subject people for long periods of time to live on 'handouts', thus, this type of relief is kept to a minimum. Finally, the best solution is voluntary repatriation, then integration and resettlement. The success of a permanent solution depends largely on two factors over which the UNHCR has no control: economic conditions and national reconciliation (the refugees feeling safe to return).

The UNHCR is strictly confined to refugees (people who flee from one country to another). But as international trust in the UNHCR has increased, so his office has tackled emergency situations involving displaced persons (people who are forced to move within their own country) such as Cyprus, Indo-China, Angola and Mozambique. These operations are not funded

by the UNHCR budget but by voluntary contributions to separately identified appeals. The UNHCR is occasionally called upon by the UN Secretary-General to administer separate Trust Funds, such as the UN Trust Fund for South Africa. The UNHCR has a staff of just under 600 located in 52 countries, the main office being in Geneva.

The UNHCR's history, compared with many other UN bodies, is generally one of success. In 1971 UN Secretary-General U Thant introduced the 'focal point' concept for the UNHCR, whereby the office co-ordinated all the UN's relief operations to aid the millions of Bengali refugees who fled from East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) into India. Indeed, almost all refugee situations are so politically dangerous that the UNHCR has moved into areas where the rest of the UN system has feared to tread alone.

The UNHCR is aided by the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. This was limited to persons who became refugees as a result of events occurring before 1951. The 1967 Protocol removed the time limitation. The Convention defines a refugee and, for nations which agree to be bound by it, imposes obligations upon nations to care for refugees, including having to co-operate with the UNHCR with a view to facilitating its duty to supervise the application of the Convention's provisions.

The UNHCR is also aided because of the wide public sympathy which can be generated by stories of refugees' plight. The 1959-60 World Refugee Year showed how much public support the UNHCR enjoyed. The 1979 International Year of the Child also benefitted the UNHCR, since about half of the world's refugees are children and the IYC's activities publicised the UNHCR's work for children.

There are, however, six main problems for the UNHCR. The most obvious is that the office can never be sure each morning in what tragedy it will become involved during that day. No one (least of all Moscow) would have expected, for example, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan to result in 500,000 refugees. While the office has acquired wide experience and expertise over the years, each new tragedy brings new difficulties. Much the same could be said about governments. There have been virtually no correct official predictions of potential refugee crises and consequently each crisis has caught governments unprepared.

Second, the legal situation is unsatisfactory. Seventy-nine countries have accepted the Convention and/or the Protocol. But most Asian countries remain outside the Convention's ambit. Meanwhile, the trend in conflicts is away from international to national or sub-national ones so that the proportion of displaced persons (that is, strictly outside the UNHCR's normal scope) will increase over refugees. Also, neither the 1951 Convention nor the 1967 Protocol indicates the procedure to be adopted for the determination of refugee status, and so procedures vary greatly from one country to another.

Third, no country will make an open-ended commitment to accept refugees in a particular situation. Where refugees go over frontiers without natural national boundaries (like a wide river or a coast) the recipient

will have difficulty in keeping them out. But where there is such a boundary, such as the English Channel, the Government limits the number it will accept and this is often less than what is needed. Indeed, in 1968, Britain showed it was willing to indulge in legal juggling (eventually criticised by the Council of Europe's human rights body) to exclude British passport holders in East Africa specifically to forestall an influx of persons expelled from East Africa.

Fourth, the debate over a refugee situation is often coloured by political considerations. The 1951 Convention deals with the factors that impel people to leave their country and not the circumstances under which the departures took place. But, as the Indo-Chinese 'boat people' showed, some people claimed that they were somehow not to be accepted in western countries because many bought their way out (as many Jews did in the late 1930's, incidentally). Meanwhile, the admission of refugees is sometimes regarded as an unfriendly act by the refugees' government (though legally a government is able to grant asylum to whomever it wishes to).

Fifth, although refugees do evoke public sympathy, the sympathy (largely generated by the mass media) is uneven. Refugees soon become politically invisible as new crises elsewhere dominate the headlines. The only way for refugees to remind the world that their problems remain unresolved is (as the Palestinians have demonstrated) to use violence. Meanwhile many refugee crises never become big news to start with. The Sudan civil war, for example, never attracted the same degree of mass media attention as did Nigeria's (which was smaller) because there were no western financial interests involved. The Indo-Chinese refugees have been extensively reported partly as a stick with which to hit the Vietnamese Government.

Finally, there are always people anxious to capitalise on the refugees' plight. Piracy, which has almost died out around the world, is again a flourishing profession in the seas through which the Indo-Chinese boat people have travelled. While some refugees' accounts may have been exaggerated or even fabricated for the purpose of earning sympathy, the physical wounds of many injured boat people are not self-inflicted. More generally, the landing of ethnic Chinese on the largely Moslem Malay east coast has resulted in politically-motivated allegations of refugees bribing officials, of their undermining the political system and of their weakening the Islamic faith.

Looking to the future, four conclusions can be drawn. First, the world is moving into an era where refugees/displaced persons will be increasingly controversial. There will be no suggestion in the 1980s that 'the ocean has been drained'. On the contrary, the refugee question has shifted from being a humanitarian issue to becoming a destabilising factor in international relations.

Second, even if governments (and the UN) cannot predict accurately when and where will be the next refugee crises, they should at least have public educational programmes to promote a greater understanding of refugees and their resettlement problems. It is ironical, for example, that

Australia, which has absorbed so many migrants and refugees since World War II (making it the world's most racially mixed society) should have been disturbed by 2,011 boat people. Refugee problems are here to stay. There is no knowing who will become a refugee. There is a need for nations to prepare themselves to absorb a greater number of refugees. Related to this, the UN should consider expanding the UNHCR's mandate (which would of course require an alteration to the 1951 Convention) to cover formally displaced persons and even ordinary migrants who find themselves in trouble (for example, Mexicans in the south-west United States).

Third, in an even wider context, refugees are but part of the movement of people from one country to another. Migration generally is becoming one of the most important branches of demography. Whereas 55 million Europeans migrated overseas between 1820 and 1930, Western Europe is now a net receiver of people, especially from developing countries. The Middle East oil producing countries have about three million foreign workers, half of Kuwait's population and 75 per cent of its work force are non-Kuwaitis. People are drawn to other countries for economic reasons. A major way of restricting migration would be the creation of the UN's New International Economic Order, whereby developing countries could provide enough work opportunities to persuade people to stay at home.

Finally, concern over refugees is a reflection of growing national self-awareness. A Briton before World War I could travel from Ireland to the Ottoman Empire without needing a passport and entry visa. The EEC is returning (in its own corner of Europe) to the situation which prevailed in 1914. The overall international trend, however, has been towards greater red-tape and bureaucracy. While there is a need for economic and social development, there is also a need for less nationalism and for some form of world federalism in which a person need only carry a standard identity card showing that he or she is a citizen of the world.

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[Dr. Keith D. Suter is Dean of Students at Wesley College, University of Sydney.]

# FREEDOM OF INFORMATION IN A WESTMINSTER STYLE GOVERNMENT

## by Tom Riley

THERE is a widespread movement throughout the free world towards more openness in Government, commonly known as the Freedom of Information movement. What this means is that those advocating 'access to government documents' laws are saying that the individual in a democratic society has the right to know what his Government is doing and why. It means, in practical terms, that an individual or group would have the right to approach any government department or agency, either orally or in writing, and be able to receive Government reports and documents. There are exceptions to what a person could receive, such as documents concerning national defence, certain criminal files, international relations where the best interests of the country could be compromised, policy documents made in confidence for Ministers prior to the preparation of legislation or the making of Cabinet decisions, documents which would intrude on the privacy of an individual and a few other limited exceptions. Advocates of information laws are quick to recognise that Government cannot be run in a fishbowl and a degree of confidentiality is necessary for the operation of good Government.

The United States has had a Freedom of Information Act since 1966 which was amended in 1974 to strengthen the Act because of the attempts of bureaucrats to stonewall and delay requests. Sweden has had a right under her Constitution dating back to 1809. These two countries are held up as examples of open Government and in both countries the citizenry has benefitted widely from the laws.

There are other countries with similar laws which, because of the wording of the laws and exceptions to broad classes of information, are not considered as viable as the American and Swedish legislation. These countries are Norway, Denmark, France and Holland.

In the Commonwealth there are four countries dealing with this question at the moment: the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Progress towards actual legislation varies in each of the four countries. Currently, in the United Kingdom, the present Conservative Government has stated as its policy that more information should be forthcoming to members of the Public but that legislation guaranteeing actual access to documents is not seen as necessary at this time. Under the Labour Administration a Freedom of Information Bill and reform of the Official Secrets Act had been promised, but the Government never delivered. The closest legislation reached in that Parliament was a private member's Bill introduced in the Autumn of 1978, which went as far as unanimous approval at second reading in the Commons in January 1979 and then into a Standing Committee for clause by clause study. This was an indication of the widespread support amongst backbenchers for such legislation. The Freud Bill, however, died with the dissolution of Parlia-

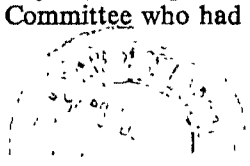
ment in March, 1979, just before the General Election. The Bill had gone as far as completion in Committee and was about to come up for the report stage when Parliament dissolved. There was little substantial action since then, apart from a private member's bill by Labour MP Michael Meacher, which never went beyond its first reading.

Australia has debated and considered information legislation more than any of the other Commonwealth countries. The idea was first proposed under the Labour Government of Gough Whitlam in 1973 when it was referred to an Interdepartmental Committee for study. A subsequent report was tabled in Parliament in December, 1975 but never acted upon. The succeeding Liberal Government of Malcolm Fraser then instructed the same Committee to draw up policy proposals for legislation (designed on the American Act) and in September 1978 produced a draft FOI Bill into Parliament. This Bill was widely condemned for its exceptions to access which, in the eyes of its critics, meant that only a very limited amount of information would have been forthcoming. It also allowed for a limited appeal system to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal and also stated that a Minister could exempt a document by signing a ministerial certificate saying it should not be released because it was not in the 'public interest'.

The Bill was then referred to the Senate Committee on Constitutional and Legal Affairs who travelled across Australia holding public hearings. They heard 129 witnesses and received 168 submissions from all sectors of the country. The Committee produced a 517 page Report into Parliament in November, 1979 and urged the Government to act upon their recommendations. The main thrust of the Report was to narrow the number of exceptions to information being released, to increase the powers of appeal of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal and to allow appeals on the majority of classes of documents. The Government have yet to reintroduce their FOI Bill, but were expected to do so in the Budget Session of August, 1980. However, the Act was not expected to become law that year as Australia had a general election in December.

In New Zealand the Government referred the whole question of access to Government information to a special committee called the Danks Committee. They are expected to report later this year. The lobbying for access laws has been going on in New Zealand since 1977. A private member's Bill was introduced in 1978 but did not get beyond first reading.

In Canada, when the current Liberal Administration of Pierre Trudeau was formerly in power, a Freedom of Information Bill had been promised but got no further than the introduction of a Green discussion paper entitled 'Legislation on Public Access to Government Documents'. The Progressive Conservative Government of Joe Clark, recognising the widespread demand for information laws which had developed in recent years under the leadership role of now retired MP Gerald Baldwin, introduced a Freedom of Information Bill into Parliament in October, 1979 where it was unanimously endorsed by all political parties. It came up for second reading in November of that year, was again endorsed and referred to the Justice and Legal Affairs Committee who had just started



Hearings when the Conservative Government was defeated on their Budget, Parliament dissolved and a General Election called.

The present Liberal administration introduced a FOI Bill with full judicial review, on 12 July, 1980 a move which took many by surprise, as previously the Liberals had been opposed to review to the courts. From the start of the lobbying in Canada the advocates of information legislation had stated clearly that the proposed Bill would need to have, in any appeal system, a final review by the courts. This was based on the American legislation which allows such an appeal. It was seen as a guarantee of information not being capriciously withheld whether for political reasons or to save a Minister or his civil servants embarrassment over information released and brought into the light of public scrutiny.

There was an extensive anti-judicial review body, mostly in the Civil Service and in the Liberal Party, who argued that under a Parliament based on Westminster such an appeal mechanism is precluded because of the theory of ministerial responsibility. This theory holds that a Minister is appointed by the Crown from the majority Party (or parties who form together to make a majority) and that the Minister is then responsible for his actions and the actions of his juniors to Parliament and Parliament alone. The theory holds that the Minister is held accountable and that if he is wrong in denying information then he must bear up under pressure from Parliament, who can defeat the Government or bring pressure to bear to have the Minister removed. Also, it is held that to give to a judge in a court of law the power to decide on matters such as, for example, national defence or national security, is to pass into the hands of the courts political power which actually belongs to the political parties. However, this argument has been vociferously opposed.

The current Bill in Canada, which went to Committee in the autumn and was expected to become Law by December, 1980, allows for an appeal on a denied document to an Information Commissioner in the first instance. This senior official (he would be of senior deputy minister rank) will have the power to enter any Government premises, review all documents in question, call witnesses and the discretion to launch an appeal on the behalf of an applicant. However, he would only be able to recommend the release of a document or report to a Minister if he thought the department was wrong in denying the request. The applicant would then have a right to appeal to the Federal Court of Canada and, ultimately, the right to apply for leave to the Supreme Court of Canada to apeal against the decision.

This step is an important one for the Commonwealth (and already exists in law in the province of New Brunswick in Canada where an Act proclaimed on January 1st 1980 allows for a judicial review) as it essentially breaks with an ongoing argument about ministerial responsibility, yet at the same time argues that a Minister could only benefit from such a mechanism.

There were precedents to this type of argument, one of them being the Conway v Rimmer case in the House of Lords in 1968 in which the Lords ruled that in certain cases the Government could not withhold informa-

tion from the courts and the courts had the right to review such documents. There was a similar case in Australia in 1979 (Sankey v Whitlam), in which the courts ruled along the lines of the Lords and argued that certain documents concerning the plaintiff should be made available to the courts in camera.

In Canada, in 1977, when the initial Green Paper was introduced carrying the argument of Ministerial Responsibility, the Canadian Bar Association took exception to this and argued that there was no inconsistency under a Westminster Government in having a judicial review. The Association published a dissertation by Professor Murray T. Rankin (of the University of Victoria) at Harvard University entitled *Freedom of Information in Canada: Will the Doors Stay Shut?* in which he argued:

(1) Access to information is a human right, and the general development of human rights is to restrict administrative discretion by legally enforceable claims.

(2) The pristine doctrine of parliamentary sovereignty . . . is no longer legally defensible. As we have seen, in Conway v Rimmer the House of Lords challenged the unrestricted right to ministers to withhold documents from public scrutiny. In the Canadian context parliamentary sovereignty is inapplicable because not Parliament but the constitution is sovereign, and the courts have consistently and from the first reviewed the enactments of legislatures in delineating the respective powers of the federal and provincial authorities. There are other instances of the judicial review of the acts of Ministers or of others acting under their authority such as in circumstances where the courts are involved in judging whether the procedural requirements of legislation and/or natural justice have been met. These and other limitations on the powers of ministers, cabinets and legislatures are compatible with British type parliamentary institutions.

(3) In political terms, cabinet and ministerial responsibility no longer prevail. Because of strict party discipline the elected executive controls Parliament. Within the executive decisive powers have shifted to appointed officials who are not effectively accountable to their political masters.

(4) Decisions related to the disclosure or non-disclosure of information are not in the true sense of the world political but are rather those of procedure. The courts are the appropriate institutions to have the final say in procedural matters.

This argument was obviously very persuasive in Canada causing the Government (and before that the previous Conservative administration) to proceed with legislation incorporating this right. The other interesting aspect of the Bill is that it stated in its preamble that the citizen has the right of access to public documents. The significance of this is that in the Canadian judiciary, much as elsewhere in the Commonwealth, a judge will only go by the wording of the clause in the act itself and will not, like the American judiciary, refer to debates at the time of enactment of the legislation and other source materials. This is important because the Canadian legislation has outlined some wide exemptions, but it is felt that this is offset by the statement of principle in the introduction to the law, very rare in common law, and also under section 49 of the Bill which states that the burden of proof is on the Government to show why a document should be withheld. It was felt that in a court the judge would interpret this to mean that the intention of the Bill was inclined towards the widest release possible. In this way Canada actually becomes the

leader of information legislation.

In Australia similar arguments have been brought forth and there the inclination has not been for a review to the courts but rather an appeal to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal. However, the Tribunal would, in the case put forward by lobbyists and the Senate Committee but not agreed upon by the Government in the case of 'sensitive documents', be able to overturn the decisions of a Minister or his civil servants.

All the arguments within the Commonwealth about Westminister style Government have been doubly enforced by successive Administrations. Advocates of access laws have argued persuasively against anything recommended by Whitehall. However, as the Prime Minister of the present U.K. Conservative Government has declared her opposition to the introduction of legislation, the emphasis now appears to be on actually bringing about a climate of opinion which will see the introduction of legislation and the arguments of ministers versus the courts as secondary, though still germane to the overall debate.

In this connection it is interesting to note the decision by Labour MP Frank Hooley (Sheffield), after he drew third on the private member's ballot, to introduce as his Private member's Bill, an Official Information Bill drafted by the Outer Circle Policy Unit, thus indicating a resurgence of the issue in the UK. His Bill was introduced for first reading on January 14, 1981 shortly after resumption of Parliament.

This is a timely initiative at a time when an ever-increasing number of people firmly believe in the right of the individual to know what its Government is doing and why. This right becomes even more important in these times of recession and inflation and rising unemployment. The star names behind current policies, such as Milton Friedman, are generally known but what is really sought is the information behind the names.

It is two years since Liberal MP Clement Freud's Bill on Freedom of Information was introduced for second reading, and adopted unanimously. That Bill went through Committee stage, where the then representatives of the Labour Government did all they could to emasculate its effectiveness. The current Bill, defeated at its second reading in February, faced much opposition from the Front Benches. The Bill was modelled on the previous Freud bill (as its authors are the same), with changes based on the experience drawn from what was learned in the Committee stage in 1979, the Protection of Information Bill and from the Access to Information Bill currently before the Canadian Parliament.

As a concluding, though interim observation it is interesting to note that Britain, which has been the leader in so many respects in the Commonwealth, lags far behind other Commonwealth countries who are progressing surely, albeit a bit too slowly for some, towards Freedom of Information legislation.

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[Tom Riley is a Canadian journalist and correspondent working from London.]

# WILL THE POLISH EAGLE FLY?

## by Leonard E. Schwartz

EMOTIONS are running high in Warsaw, Gdansk, Szczecin.... The Polish Communist Party is fearful that the free trade union reformers may press for still more reforms and, in the process, destroy the party. Reformers, like Zielinski of the Szczecin Workers Committee, protest that they are under pressure to produce quick results, explaining that people will not await the outcome of lengthy negotiations.

The confrontation between communism and reformism facing Poland (and the world) raises the question whether a protest movement, represented in this case by 'Solidarity', can become a significant political force within Poland without destroying it. Lest one casts stones too readily, the difficulties besetting the American protest movement of the 60's in its attempts to transform the American society should be remembered.

Recently, much has been written about the external forces impinging on Poland: Soviet blandishments, troop movements, manoeuvres, Warsaw bloc statements, NATO responses.... Factors affecting Poland's internal cohesion have received less attention. Yet even a casual student of European history is aware that, from time immemorial, the Poles have struggled to assert their independence from their neighbours and without much success. Aside from being outmatched militarily, Poland has traditionally suffered from internal dissensions, the nature of which sheds light on the current conflict within Poland.

In former days, the Magnates of old Poland (16 to 17 great families), in their conflicts with one another would not hesitate to join forces with foreign powers, including Poland's long-standing enemies, Austria, Prussia and Russia. The pro-French Radziwill magnates, for instance, in its battles with the pro-Russian Czartorski magnates would suddenly find themselves battling with the Russian army. Besides inviting foreign powers to interfere in Poland's affairs, the magnates would also split up the Polish gentry into competing factions. Often exercising more power than Polish kings, the magnates would commandeer gentry to serve in their militias, administer their estates, carry out their will in the Parliaments called from time to time and even bear arms against their enemies, domestic as well as foreign.

In so doing, the magnates fostered a state of constant turmoil. But the forces dividing Poland were not restricted to the battlefield. Attempts at political unification suffered as well. The continuing attempts by Polish kings to forge a national parliament were often crippled by various magnates who had an array of home grown instruments at their disposal: imperative mandate and *liberum* veto. The imperative mandate consisted of the referendum each member of Parliament received from his constituents, usually a querulous group of country squires. However controversial or complex the referendum, it was imperative upon the member

to hew the line drawn therein, the consequences on national unity notwithstanding.

The effect of the *liberum* veto on national unity was even more devastating. Under this strategem, any Parliament member could interpose a veto on any issue at any time. The results were threefold and all equally disruptive: (1) defeat of the proposition, (2) dissolution of the Parliament, and (3) nullification of all the decisions previously taken by the Parliament. Of the 55 sessions of Parliament held between 1652 and 1764, 48 were nullified and of these 43 by the vote of a single deputy.

Poland's neighbours, well aware of the divisive effect of the *liberum* veto, took advantage of it to bribe Polish Parliamentarians to exercise the veto at moments favourable to them, in addition to maintaining their own political parties inside Poland and intervening in elections to the Polish throne. During the 1790's, Russia supported the Eastern Orthodox Poles who were then considered 'dissidents' in Roman Catholic Poland. Through them, Russia hoped to establish a political party capable of eventually wielding power in her name. In an ironic comment on current history, Catherine II, Empress of all Russia, set up a 'Confederation of the Dissidents.'

Establishment of 'confederations' was another divisive Polish tradition. Under it, magnates and gentry, in competition with one another, would ally themselves with a foreign power, its non-friendliness to Poland being of secondary importance. Some confederations were formed to aid the Polish king in times of emergency. Others were established to prevent outbreaks of disorder, while still others were formed in opposition to the king. But all confederations, whatever their origin, shared one characteristic in common: by splitting up the country into factions, they increased the danger of civil war. In the words of the famous Prussian general, von Moltke, 'Poland's brand of confederation is revolution, legally organised.'

Brandishing appropriate shows of force, Russia's empress managed to 'persuade' Poland's parliament to grant the 'dissidents' extensive rights and privileges as well as to accept a Russian guarantee of the Polish constitution, all duly ratified in a 'Perpetual Treaty of Peace between the Polish Commonwealth and the Empire of all Russia.'

Only two years later, (1792), Catherine II formed another 'confederation.' Known as the Confederation of Targowica (which was meant to imply Polish origins), it again amassed Polish malcontents under Russia's banner. Under the 'Treaty of Peace' that followed this confederation, Poland ceded over half of its territory to the 'colossus from the north' while the remainder was transformed into a Russian protectorate. In addition, Russia obtained the right to send troops into Poland 'in all cases of necessity.' One of the last acts of Poland's only truly independent Parliament, besides affirming the Russian treaty, was to restore the divisive practice of the *liberum* veto as well as that of serfdom.[1]

The present-day conflict in Poland demonstrates that, as in the olden

days, Russia strives to exploit internal Polish differences. Further, the time-honoured practice of the 'confederation' is still very much alive. Just three weeks ago, the USSR formed a confederation with top-ranking officers from the Polish army, government officials and party *'apparatchiks.'* As in former days, the aim is to weaken internal cohesion within Poland; in this case, the 'Solidarity' free labour movement.

While everyone's gaze was fixed on the military manoeuvring outside Poland's borders, the battle for Poland began—inside Poland. Whether the conflict will spread further or not depends on whether the confrontation between the antagonists inside Poland can find a *modus vivendi* or not. The question whether the reformers and the Polish officials can reach some kind of lasting agreement is, at the moment, more significant than whose troops are moving where. For if Poland's internal groups can finally achieve some kind of working relationship, the Soviet Union may feel less threatened.

In a penetrating and sympathetic analysis of the current situation in Poland, Daniel Passent, columnist for the widely acclaimed Polish state journal of the intelligenstia, *Politikya* described the multiplicity of divisive forces tugging at Poland's innards.

> The situation in Poland, (he wrote), is comparable to that of a passenger on a ship cheated by its captain. Should the captain be made to pay for his wrongdoings by sinking the entire ship so that all would go down?

In posing a question to various leaders of the 'Solidarity' movement, whether anti-socialist (i.e. anti-government) elements existed within 'Solidarity,' Passent received a diverse array of replies underscoring the confusion and disunity which he feels typifies the Polish situation of the moment.[2] Solidarity leaders like Gwiazda and Pienkowska, both hailing from Gdansk, scene of the August 1980 shipyard riots, do not believe that there are any anti-socialist elements in 'Solidarity' at all. Marian Jurczyk, leader of the Szczecin strikes, declares that anti-socialist elements *do* exist. But, he adds, he has not actually seen them. However, the 'Solidarity' branch in Silesia has apparently not only 'seen' them but went so far as to condemn them.

Parallel with the profusion of divergent attitudes by the reformers, the Polish 'United Workers' Party (better known as the Communist Party) is being rent by a gnawing fear that the reformists are taking over. Their fear of a takeover extends even to the media despite the fact that this is under strict government control.

As new demands are made daily, paranoia spreads. Forty-seven groups of the Polish society have succeeded in achieving the much prized status of 'free labour union.' Sensing that the accelerating flow of 'free labour' demands may well breach the absorption limits of the official 'United Workers Party,' Lech Walesa, titular leader of the 'Solidarity' movement, has called for a temporary moratorium.

But despite Walesa's plea for moderation and absorption, the flow of demands keeps on growing. One of the largest labour groups in Poland,

the private farmers, who play an important role as a minority partner in the official United Workers Party, are pressing for re-designation as a free labour union. Their demand could well prove to be the un-coupler.

In the words of the deputy leader of the Szczecin strikes, 'our Captain has no compass.' In such an atmosphere, as in times past, outside powers may take advantage of Polish incohesion leading to a further dimunition of Poland's personality. The challenge confronting Poland at this time, and, because of its perceived importance to Europe and the world, was aptly summed up in *Politikya* by Daniel Passent:

> 'Will this be the most important event since the (Soviet) October Revolution, or will it be something akin to the split with Yugoslavia, or, will it be yet another unsuccessful attempt of the Polish eagle to fly. . . .?'

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NOTES:

1. For background on Polish history during this period, see Cecil Mankowski's *Study of the Polish Partition Period* (1772-1795).
2. Daniel Passent. 'On Poland's "Solidarity".' Polish weekly *'Politikya'* reported in the New York Times, 29 November 1980.

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[Leonard E. Schwartz is Professor of International Relations at CSUS. He has been a consultant to a White House conference on international cooperation and adviser to international organisations and governments.]

The May issue of *Contemporary Review* includes *Detente and Atlantic Relations* by James H. Wyllie, *The Last Days of the Republic of Vietnam* by Nghiem Xuan Thien, *Doctors and the Mounting Peril of Nuclear Proliferation* by J. A. Loraine and *'The Last Man in Europe': a Comment on George Orwell's 1984* by John Barnsley.

# AN OPEN LETTER TO THE (FORMER) AMERICAN HOSTAGES

## by Robin Woodsworth Carlsen

DEAR (former) Hostages,

Now that you have come home you are in a position to do a great service for the American people. It is not likely that you will, but I shall make my request anyway.

That you are heroes—or are perceived that way—there can be no doubt. Whether your ordeal actually merits that distinction intrinsically, that is, based upon what you really achieved in surviving your captivity, is another matter. I rather think that there is a disproportionate projection of heroism given the actual conditions and circumstances under which you were held those 444 days.

Of course I shall be attacked for making such an assertion. The only thing worse (in America) than communism is to be someone who might not throw a dart at a poster of Ayatollah Khomeini. But I shall make it nonetheless. I am not interested in serving the ego and state propaganda interests that have become so overwhelmingly significant since the beginning of this confrontation on November 4, 1979. Taking a ruthless examination of all the moral cant over the lawlessness of the Iranian action in seizing you, one has to finally assume there are laws of natural human instinct that eventually amount to more potent sources of inspiration than those arbitrarily conceived of by man. The overthrow of Mossadegh in '53, the torture at the hands of the CIA-trained SAVAK, the removal of billions of dollars of Iranian funds by the Shah and his family, the wanton disregard for the feelings of the Iranians by the admission of the Shah into the United States, the discussion by the National Security Adviser of a possible military coup against the revolution prior to the hostage-taking, and the evidence of subversive activity within the very embassy within which you were working—these constitute violations of national, international, and natural laws certainly as significant as the violation of an embassy.

And the thing is that you knew (or certainly did before your debriefing —we'll come to that in a moment) that the Iranians had a point in all this, a point which I suggest you became quite receptive to during your months in captivity. However, the recognition of moral arguments inconvenient to the American position of absolute innocence is not tolerated within a consciousness subject—as employees of the State—to the more patriotic and propagandistic considerations of national pride. Thus one suspects that however many of you began to feel some sympathy for the Iranians—and even some sense of their justification for their lawless action—such a judgement is fast being eroded away in the present demands for a simple condemnation of the Iranians, in the demands for descriptions of your ordeal—specifically the brutality and savagery of your captors.

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But I would ask that you subject your conscience to a consideration perhaps higher than the one that immediately begins to impose itself upon you in the headiness of being inundated by a deliriously overjoyed America. There are after all huge questions to be asked over this whole matter, and were the Iranians as brutal and sadistic as we are now being led to believe (which I question in the most serious terms) there would still be the issue of why this whole event took place. To simply say: what can we do to prevent this from ever happening again is to ignore the most fundamental impulses that have structured such intense and complex reactions both among thoughtful Iranians and among ourselves—those of us susceptible to a form of moral imagination not part of the calculations of the Central Intelligence Agency, for instance.

That you must simply utter a statement exonerating the Iranians, expressing your sympathy with their revolutionary ideals or the grievances which led them to act in this way, is absurd. That can never be. However, I would ask that you consider the immense significance you could have on the consciousness of the whole world—and thus the possibilities of thinking in terms of the human species as a single community attempting to live together on this planet—if you entered into some of the more dissonant facts of this case. And this would mean resisting the efforts of some of your debriefing, that is, the encouragement to depict your captors in terms which deprive them of any kind of dignity or moral persuasiveness. After all, that has been one of the most vexatious issues throughout this whole ordeal, that the Iranians had some legitimate grievances, that they had suffered massively, that they wanted the world to hear their plea for national sovereignty, for national independence and freedom from super-power domination. Now, with the stories of extreme physical and mental torture there is the convenient and effective eradication of the authority of the Iranians to assert their Islamic piety and purity, for the single most overwhelming fact of this revolution and this confrontation has been the affirmation of its intensely religious basis. The stories of beatings and cruelty thus tend to take away from the Iranians the very spiritual credibility that made their charges assume a character quite different from say, the North Vietnamese. Indeed, by portraying the Moslem students as 'despicable savages' (former President Carter's words) the United States has silenced the Iranian claim of being motivated by Islamic principles, and more importantly brought into question the honesty and intention of their whole argument. It was their refusal to compromise on their principles, their refusal to descend to the level of those Americans who felt such outrage on your behalf and visited such physical punishment on Iranians living in the United States, that lent to them that respectability and dignity so frustrating to your leaders. In the absence of this willingness to honour their Islamic code they would have been far more vulnerable to the moral attacks mounted by the West. At this moment it would seem all their righteousness and holier-than-CIA attitude has been damaged beyond repair.

But of course you could change all this—not by turning everything around and making the preposterous claim that the Iranians were right

and you were wrong, but by acknowledging some of the deepest and most disquieting feelings you had during the whole incarceration. In other words by giving expression to some of the doubts raised in your souls when you began to hear the Iranian side of things.

I am especially bold in making this request for a number of reasons. First of all I have been to Iran and interviewed extensively some of the leaders of the Moslem students who held you all this time (this took place inside the embassy compound, where I felt the urgency of your predicament). Secondly, because I sensed in all the films made during your captivity—and the candid remarks of the visiting clergymen (none of whom received even a whisper from any of you of maltreatment—even in private conversations with you)—conditions quite contradictory to those now being proclaimed by many of you. Indeed, your appearance and manner immediately upon arrival in Algeria and West Germany indicated a rather miraculous physical and mental state, certainly one that eloquently spoke of the essentially benign effects of this incarceration. Since then, virtually all the tales of horror reported have lacked poetic power (one did not feel the naturally cathartic, intense expression of emotion or relief in the telling); one suspects the very polarized and icy way in which such stories are coming out casts some doubt on their authenticity, particularly when not one hostage can point to *any* marks of abuse on his or her body. It seems that the very absence of brutality has created the most exaggerated depiction of the opposite, and this is of course the necessary situation that has to be established in order for the United States to salvage some pride over this. When you first came out of your imprisonment you all seemed so light and calm, so bright and gentle. Then, when certain stories began to come out, most of that naturalness and radiance began to dissolve and hardness and tension came into your faces and expression. Could this be because of the contradiction such stories imposed upon your souls?

This is of course a radical thesis/assertion of mine, but I wait to be moved by any account of brutality at the hands of your captors. Not one account has had a resonance of emotional or moral truth. And I believe that these stories represent—as in no other recent historical POW episode—an almost total violation of the facts. Why? Because the single dominant theme of the psychology of your captors was their devotion to Islam, their pride in the code under which they behaved. Surely they would know they would bring themselves, their revolution, their leader, under ridicule and contempt if they at all compromised on this issue, that is, if they did administer the beatings, kickings, torture claimed by at least several of the more enthusiastically hostile of you. No, I believe—based on my information and experience: talking with Iranians, mixing in the huge rallies, gathering the deepest impressions of the Iranian people—that you have been deliberately induced to fabricate and exaggerate such stories. The argument that these stories could not come out until now for fear of reprisals against you simply is absurd. From the beginning Mr. Carter and the State Department have not spared any moment to heap charges of abuse upon the Iranians. It simply is not credible that

Richard Queen, the clergymen, and the interviews on film would indicate a complete absence of abuse and that then we would be told that this was a huge coverup. There was no fear of reprisals. You knew you would receive fair treatment and if there had been something serious this would have been flashed across the media. There were countless times that former President Carter and the State Department claimed you were receiving beatings. Why did they insist on this if they feared reprisals?

No, you knew these students—or the most influential of them, the ones that directed the treatment and conditions of your captivity—to be honourable, devout and genuinely dedicated to their God and to their cause. Their personalities, their absolute sense of religious piety combined with physical courage (their willingness to be martyred in the cause of their holy war with 'evil') did touch you, did affect your own way of looking at things—perhaps even made you question some of the inviolable assumptions of American foreign policy and cultural supremacy. They did present a rather different interpretation of the universe. And I believe they did this movingly. Certainly this is not at all to suggest that all those students you came in contact with acted from the highest moral impulses, but I believe you did come across a significant number of your Iranians who fulfilled remarkably their religious ideals, and that their description and enunciation of Islam manifested itself in an unforgettable way—unforgettable maybe to the soul, quite forgettable once faced with the contradicting necessities of American ideological considerations—emphasised I am sure during your debriefings.

Now what the hell gives me the right to make such suggestions—or on what possible basis do I believe such things are true? Because this was my experience in talking to the Iranians and this has been the deepest intuition in my soul during these past fourteen months when I have been drawn into a slightly different interpretation of Iran than the newspaper and magazine interpretation I received during the downfall of the Shah. I am neither a Moslem nor someone who lives according to some fixed, mythologically-determined code of morality. I have strong reservations about the dangers of the hardline clerical faction in Iran appropriating all the power to itself and equating Islamic piety with the ability to be pragmatically imaginative. There are of course great pitfalls in an inflexible dogmatism, particularly if practised by individuals who are blinded by that dogmatism from recognising the spontaneous and creative impulses of individuality. That Iran is in the grip of an acrimonious dialogue over the validity of an absolutely doctrinaire approach to social, political, and economic matters versus a pragmatic, flexible approach is apparent. What the outcome will be of this dialogue—whether, for instance, the bazaaris will achieve some voice in the designation of power in the government, whether they will succeed in showing Prime Minister Rajai that his appointments too recklessly ignore professional competence —remains to be seen. And there are of course great internal problems beyond these—over the whole direction of the revolution. But all this fanaticism, ineptitude, and conflict in Iran does not diminish the power or the integrity of their profoundly Islamic consciousness, nor of the

uniqueness of what they have achieved in the context of this belief system. My trip to Beheste Zahra Cemetery was enough to give me the vividness of the sacrifice they made for their revolution; somewhere that same sense of sacrifice will enable them to learn the things they have to learn to bring this revolution out of its more primitive stages into something that is viable and progressive, retaining its purely Islamic content. There is of course talk about the Russians moving in, about the left waiting in the wings for the predictable disintegration of the economic and political order in Iran; however, it is my contention that the impulse of Islam—and the enormity of what the Iranians have given so far to create this unprecedented revolution—runs too deep into the consciousness of the people to be able to be influenced substantially by a purely secular and alien kind of ideology, an ideology incidentally that your student captors rejected out of hand.

This said, we can get back to my main point, which is to ascertain the influence that this whole experience can have on the world community, and, more especially, your own people, people who wilfully ignore a set of cultural values so different from their own, a set of cultural values that suggest the world is not made in the image of the United States. I think you know now—if you didn't know it already, that the Iranians have presented to the world a deep, almost cosmic desire to shape and organise their civilisation around an idea (Islam) that in many ways is directly opposed to the values and geopolitical strategies of the West.

And it is my view that we must allow them this experiment—as quixotic as we may insist it is. The various imperial powers of the Western world have given a twentieth century outlook and expectation to the various colonies they have transformed. But in the case of Iran we see a reaction to the purely secular, rational mode of perception and organisation and, unlike other places where the alternative has been a purely materialist view of man and a consequent hostile ideology to our own, in Iran there is a genuine alternative to our own system and values. The strength, the resourcefulness, the imagination of the United States—and the great technological and economic benefits of its expertise—has given something of unquestioned and critical value to other countries, to the whole world. But the time has come now when the United States must recognise the right of other countries to transform themselves according to whatever model they may choose, and it is clear that ideally these newly emerging identities seek to remain free of dependence on either of the super-powers. Iran is however the classic example of a country determined to alter the face of the values we are accustomed to, and the nature of their struggle has had something singularly impressive about it. It has brought about its revolution with contempt for any assistance from the Soviet Union and it is equally determined to maintain that independence. Thus it becomes clear that the United States must honour the intent of the Iranians to carve out an identity radically different from the Western model. I have no fears that Iran will become dominated by the Marxist philosophy and we cannot assume therefore that it constitutes a threat to the interests of the West.

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The big problem of Iran is the threat it poses to the whole Middle East, its revitalised form of Islam that makes the more conservative Arab states seem to be Islamic in a more artificial sense, that is, Islamic only insofar as this is the cultural and religious matrix in which the status quo may be maintained. The Ayatollah Khomeini is probably not the 'pig' he is described as by one of you; in my estimation he is a genuine figure representing the most authentically Islamic consciousness. He is like an Old Testament prophet come to life. That he is severe in his judgements, that he is uncompromising in his rejection of Western values, that he militantly insists on the authority of his own vision of Islam seems pretty clear; however, as you well know, he is almost universally loved by his people and is accorded a status and respect commensurate with his forty years' struggle to bring Iran out of the clutches of a hated monarchy and out of the dominant power of imperialism. Our perception of this octogenarian leader as a lunatic just shows how culturally and emotionally prejudiced we are.

Anyhow you know the reverence in which he is held in Iran—and especially among those who kept you in captivity. Well, this is all part of the story: that the simple black and white categories of Iranian terrorism versus U.S. nobility are hardly the final conclusion on all this. And it is the potential power you have to issue analyses not entirely compatible with this prevailing view that could make of this protracted drama something more than just brutal captivity. This is the final meaning of this letter, the meaning that could translate this experience so that we all —and especially your own people—could learn something. Was the final meaning confined to outrage at the cruelty of your treatment? No, there is a huge question about the motivation of the Iranians in first acting to take over your embassy and then there is the question of what you learned in the long months of your captivity about the Iranian mind. Finally there is the whole question about American foreign policy in the Middle East and the implication of the Iranian experience for the West, for America.

Why did this happen? What led up to the event? What are the Iranians trying to tell us? Do we have anything to learn from this? Was there something positive underneath all of it? Can the confrontation be converted into something that effectively influences American foreign policy, that can enable the United States to understand more clearly the differing perceptions among other cultures? And it is the intimate connection you had with the students that can give to you the basis to answer some of these questions. Rather than merely giving the accounts of the brutality of your captors (which I believe to be a distortion of the main theme of your treatment) why not persuade your employer—the State Department—that this experience can be looked at from angles other than the humiliation of the United States, the lesson needing to be more militarily prepared, the lesson of just getting tougher. No. This did not happen because America was not strong enough, because the Iranians perceived a weakness in the policies and power of the Carter administration. It came about because those policies, that power, were being used in a manner that inflicted great suffering on millions of people. To prevent

it, the idea is to find an alternative to creating bulwarks against communism, itself a reaction to the policies of Western capitalism.

So, as you begin to discuss your experiences within the expectation of your giving stories of Iranian brutality and maltreatment, how about considering the radical thesis that you may be the instruments of something that could change the direction of the world's events by introducing the dissonant fact that Iran—and these captors—do have something to tell us. That many of your experiences were gruesome, that some of your captors behaved in violation of the Islamic code honoured by the majority of the students, I am sure has a basis. But I ask you to resist the simplistic and distorted view that would fit into the wishes of the State Department and the American people that you were the victims and heroes of a great war of resistance, on a par with the heroes emerging from any other kind of noble cause.

It may be necessary to convince yourselves that this is the case. It may be that you find this letter a fatuous account of what happened and of the significance of your experience. It may be that it was entirely accidental that you all looked so bright and healthy when you arrived in Algeria—with a special kind of serenity and dignity that spoke of the rather startling nature of your experience in a good sense. But in the meantime, as I hear the mounting cries of revenge and hatred over what happened, I cannot help but wince at the damage being done to a truth that stands outside patriotic or national or collective ego concerns, a truth that says that something complex, powerful, and transformational happened to you during those fourteen months, something that we wish you to share with us, something that might make a difference in a world where the negative passions have been already aroused.

My poetic view of things says you will have to fight hard to maintain the conviction that the experience was wholly negative and that your soul is not freighted with a message of import to all of us, a message that even you as yet might not understand, but a message nevertheless that goes against the present hysteria and would give us some secrets about this play we have all been in, that, however discomfiting to the narrow ego, still addresses itself to something within all of us desperately seeking to manifest itself. What is that message? Something to do with compassion, love, and an understanding of a different kind of morality than the one we are determined will make the Central Intelligence Agency the organ of deliverance sufficient to keep us from being humiliated again.

Trust that life itself asks you to articulate something. You have been given this experience so that the rest of us can break out of the boundaries that have alienated us from the possibility of conceiving of how the universe and human existence can be experienced and understood in a completely different light from that in which we see it now. A light that gives so much more light to our own perception.

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[Robin Woodsworth Carlsen is author of *Crisis in Iran* and *Seventeen Days in Tehran.*]

# THE DIPLOMACY OF HIGH ASIA

## by John Charles Edward Bowen

WHEN, during the autumn of 1943, at Oghi, in the Hazara District of the North-West Frontier Province, Muhammad Zarif Khan started telling me some of the tales with which his mind was stored, I was intrigued to discover that those tales in which he described his adventures while serving the Raj were no less enthralling than the other stories he told me about people and events with which he had not been personally concerned.

It is necessary to explain that Muhammad Zarif had been transferred, with a black mark against his name, from Waziristan to the H.Q. of the Mansehra Sub-Division of Hazara District. In making this posting the Chief Secretary of the North-West Frontier Province seems to have borne in mind the character of the Political Officer under whom Zarif would now be serving, for Major Toby O'Brien (as we will call him) was well known to be of a choleric and impatient disposition and, what is more, a stern disciplinarian, who (the Chief Secretary must have felt sure) would have no difficulty in curbing Zarif's now known tendency to achieve the aims of Government policy by unorthodox methods of his own invention.

Not long after Zarif's transfer, news reached Mansehra that serious trouble was brewing in the Tribal Territory of the Indus Kohistan, which lies to the west of the upper Kagan Valley. That valley is a tongue of Hazara territory, which curls like a snake round the far side of Kashmir until, at its northern end, it reaches the Chilas border at the summit of the 13,000 ft. high Babusar Pass.

The tribes of the Indus Kohistan had been in a state of subdued ferment since the previous summer, when a well-known Explorer (who ought to have known better) had insisted on entering and making a prolonged stay in their territory. During the course of his leisurely progress through it a pair of valuable binoculars belonging to him had been stolen, and the efforts my predecessor had made to try to persuade the Maliks (the tribal Elders) to find the binoculars and restore them to their rightful owner had proved unavailing.

The people of the Indus Kohistan were so devoted to the preservation of their lawless independence that they had several times rejected the offers of the Government of India to provide them with schools and a travelling dispensary. Since they regarded the Government's benevolent interest in their welfare as an unwarranted interference in the conduct of their affairs, they cannot be blamed for resenting the Explorer's uninvited, and deeply misunderstood, presence among them. Their resentment had been exploited by a fanatical Faqir named Amirah who, early in the summer of Zarif's arrival in Mansehra, had started preaching a Jihad against the British. Amirah's fiery speeches had so influenced some of the hot-headed younger tribesmen that they had laid an ambush for a patrol of the Gilgit Scouts close to the Chilas border, and had

succeeded in killing an N.C.O. and wounding three other ranks.

The situation was now full of dangerous possibilities, for retribution would have to be exacted for the attack on the Gilgit patrol, and if this led to an enthusiastic response to the Faqir's call for a Jihad, it would mean that, as soon as the summer was over and the crops harvested, a lashkar of undisciplined riflemen would erupt from the highlands of Kohistan to carry fire and sword into the lowland villages of Hazara. It was therefore of the utmost importance that the Jirga, held each August in the village of Naran in the upper Kagan Valley, to which the Elders of the Kohistani Tribes came to discuss their doubts and difficulties with the Assistant Commissioner, Mansehra, should that summer be an unqualified success.

During July 1942 an official letter was sent to the Kohistani Maliks summoning them to meet the Assistant Commissioner at Naran early in August; and a few weeks later Toby O'Brien mounted his sturdy Badakhshani pony and set out on the first march of his seven-day ride up the Kagan Valley from Balakot to Naran. Before leaving Mansehra he bade a tender farewell to his wife, promising that he would be back without fail by the middle of September—in time for the birth of a long-hoped-for son and heir. Muhammad Zarif was meanwhile left in charge at Mansehra to deputise for the absent A.C.

Among the local officials who accompanied O'Brien to Naran was the Mohurrar (the Treasury Clerk of the Sub-Division) who brought with him, packed in a *yakdan* on a led pony, the 3,000 Rupees, *Khercheh,* which the Assistant Commissioner had at his disposal to pay to the Kohistani Tribes. This sum represented a dual resolve on the part of the Government, on the one hand to provide the tribesmen with sufficient cash to meet the basic needs of their austere lives in the mountains of Kohistan, and on the other to guarantee—by the threat of withdrawing the allowance—the continued peaceful behaviour of the Tribes towards their neighbours in Hazara District.

Toby O'Brien must have felt sure that, when it came to the crunch during the forthcoming Jirga, the Tribal Elders would, however reluctantly, agree to accept his advice to expel the Faqir rather than lose the 3,000 Rupees he had with him, which they were well aware he had the power either to distribute to them or withhold. As things turned out, Toby was unable to play what he knew to be the trump card in his hand because, on the day appointed for the Jirga to be held in Naran, not one of the Kohistani Maliks put in an appearance.

Toby spent several days fishing for trout in the fast-flowing Kunhar River, while he waited in vain for the tribesmen to appear. Next, he sent a cajoling letter by special messenger across the mountains to Jalkot and, when that elicited no reply, he followed it a few days later with a threatening one. It was to no avail, and at the beginning of September the disappointed and angry Assistant Commissioner, having given up all hope of persuading the Kohistanis to meet him in Naran, mounted his pony and, followed by his Camp Clerk, Mohurrar, a Naik and Constables of the Indian Police, Chuprassis, servants and camp followers, jingled off down

the Valley towards Balakot.

He was met at Mansehra by Muhammad Zarif who, smiling broadly, expressed his sympathy at the Sahib's discomfiture. 'Oh go to Hell, Zarif', exclaimed O'Brien, 'or to Naran—if you think you'll be more successful than I'. 'I will go, Sahib, and gladly', answered Zarif, 'but on condition that, if I am successful in driving Amirah out of our *Illaqeh*, the black mark against my name will be expunged'. 'I promise', said the Major, and rode on to greet his wife.

Muhammad Zarif wasted no time. That afternoon he drew from the Treasury 150 Rupees, which was the negligible sum sanctioned by the A.C. for him to spend, if necessary, in Naran, and early the following morning he was on his way up the valley from Balakot. By riding double stages he reached Naran by the evening of the third day.

The action Zarif took the next morning spread consternation among the Hindu shopkeepers of Naran. He informed them that they had two days in which to settle their affairs, and that on the third day they would have to accompany him down the valley to Balakot. It was only natural for the *banyas* to raise their voices in protest against this order, but Zarif merely pointed to the Frontier Constabulary Post at the edge of the village, and asked, 'Do you wish to come in fetters?'

That evening the stricken shopkeepers came and prostrated themselves before him. 'Khan Sahib', they pleaded, 'thou hast always been the Protector of the Poor' (at this Zarif scowled at them and fidgeted with the butt of his revolver), 'give us but *four* days in which to collect our debts from those rascals of Kohistanis, and we will come as thou biddest.' 'Very well', growled Zarif, 'let them come and settle their accounts with you not later than four days from now—or it will be the worse for you'.

It took no more than a day for the news to spread among the Kohistanis that action was being taken to remove beyond their reach the only shops to which they had access. For the tribesmen this would be disastrous, because from nowhere except Naran could they obtain an essential supply of domestic salt. It is impossible to know how long and how bitter were the arguments which ensued between the Elders, who were determined not to be deprived of salt, and the young hotheads who were equally determined to start a Holy War. What is certain is that, by the evening of the third day, all the tribal Maliks who had been bidden to the original Jirga and failed to attend it, were now assembled in Naran, ready and anxious to meet Zarif Khan.

The result of the Jirga, held the next morning on a meadow beside the Kunhar River, was inconclusive. Zarif, I am told, addressed the Tribal Elders eloquently in Pushtu (their language and his) for more than two hours, but by the end of the morning he had been able to extract from them nothing more than a written statement to the effect that they would be glad if Amirah left their territory. Their refusal to insist on the Faqir removing himself from the Indus Kohistan was proof that the arguments of the war party had prevailed, and that a Jihad would probably be declared as soon as the crops had been harvested.

It seems likely that Zarif's advocacy would have won acceptance if at

that moment he had had available to disburse to the Maliks the 3,000 Rupees, *Khercheh,* which the Assistant Commissioner had brought with him to Naran a month earlier, for human nature being what it is, a handsome cash payment sometimes proves more convincing than the most eloquent oratory. As it was, Zarif spent half the sum allotted to him on the purchase of two bullocks which he had slaughtered and their flesh roasted to provide a feast that evening for all who had attended the Jirga. He carefully divided the balance of the money, and paid 15 Rupees to each of the leading tribesmen.

It was by no means royal munificence, and yet when, ten days later, Zarif reported to Major O'Brien in Mansehra he had what that officer called 'the infernal impudence' to claim that his Kagan mission had achieved complete success. 'What do you mean by saying that?' shouted his enraged superior officer, 'when all you have brought back with you is a dirty bit of paper saying that the Kohistani Elders would be glad if Faqir Amirah moved out of their territory?' 'Have patience, Sahib,' replied Zarif, inclining his head modestly, 'for I promise that by the end of next week the Faqir will have fled from our *illaqeh*'.

Zarif's prophesy did indeed come true, but *why* it came true Toby O'Brien never guessed. It was sufficient for him to receive, a few days later, a telegram from the Political Agent, Gilgit, which ran, 'Hajji Amirah passed through Gilgit territory into Kashgar night of 16th-17th September. Congratulations'. When Toby had read this message he breathed a sigh of relief and sent for Zarif. Being a generous man, he congratulated him and at once wrote a commendatory letter to the Chief Secretary of the Province, requesting that the remarks entered in Zarif's Confidential File, referring to his 'deplorably unscrupulous methods', should be expunged from the record.

It seems never to have occurred to Toby O'Brien who, with his wife and 6 months old son, was transferred to Baluchistan the following spring, to try to discover by what extraordinary means the threatened Jihad had been averted. But the story of Zarif's successful diplomacy spread up and down the Frontier, and it intrigued me so much that, after I had taken charge of the Mansehra Sub-Division, I several times asked Zarif to tell me the real reason why the Faqir had fled so precipitately from the Indus Kohistan.

It was not till many months later, until in fact the day before I left Mansehra on transfer to the Persian Gulf, that the secret of what had happened was revealed to me. This time Zarif did not shut up like a clam when I asked what miraculous means he had employed in order to get rid of the Faqir. 'It was no miracle, Sahib', he answered. 'That night in Naran, after I had provided a feast for the Elders of the Tribe, I took a certain Malik aside. I asked him whether it had ever occurred to him to wonder why a British officer as impatient and choleric as Major O'Brien, whose wife moreover might at any moment need him to take her from Mansehra to hospital in Abboltabad for the birth of their child, had remained for nearly a month, *apparently idle,* in Naran. That aroused his interest. "I know for a fact," I went on, "but I would tell no one in the

world but thee, that the Sahib has heavily bribed the Jalkotis (a subsection of the leading Kohistani tribe) to assassinate Faqir Amirah before the September moon is half-full".

'At that moment some of the other Maliks came over from the fire to join us, and he and I had no opportunity for any further conversation. But I know that, within a week, word that the Jalkotis were planning to murder Amirah at the English Sahib's behest had reached him in the depths of Kohistan, and that it was this threat which led him, in mid-September, to flee from our territory into Chinese Turkestan. Well, Sahib', concluded Zarif Khan smiling broadly, 'as you know, for me also the story ended happily: Allah be praised for His mercy and compassion'.

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[John Charles Edward Bowen, who contributes to this issue a true story about the old North-West Frontier of India, was born there and returned in 1932 to serve for 15 years in the Indian Army and Indian Political Service. His collection of *Plain Tales of the Afghan Border* is due for publication later this year.]

# POEM

## CRAZY LOVE POEM FOR AN UNSEEN LADY

Where chaos is astonished into order
and Taurus tunes in to the Zodiac,
I am turning somersaults
among the stars,
and playing leapfrog with the planets.

Where the long winter darkness
clutches the earth, and is seared
by fragments of the rainbow light,
I am dancing and juggling,
tossing my multi-coloured balls
in prismatic arcs that, falling,
break with light the surface of the sea.

In the midst of silence
where music has long been abandoned,
I am singing aloud
and cracking my desperate jokes
where cloud canopies and seascapes meet.

In the romantic fairground
cordoned off from the crowd
and islanded by time,
I am blasting organic tunes
into the wasted and desolate air.

And all because
I heard your footsteps
half way across a world
approaching me.

HOWARD SERGEANT

# FRINGE BENEFITS

## by Adrian Rendle

ALTERNATIVE theatre is a relatively new label that has been given to 'fringe' theatre and the attendant community and educational theatre enterprises which have been steadily growing over the last ten years.

The growth and the reason for its development is something that has been highlighted by the destructive philistine policy in both education and the arts which has become the greatest danger to culture in the new decade.

Government has a long standing obligation and responsibility to the arts that dates back to 1948 when the local rates were levied at sixpence in the pound as available funding for the development of the arts in all local councils. It would, I think, be true to say that the full rate was rarely applied. Following this, the annual increase of the national grant to the Arts Council, given by successive central governments, has gradually been increased with the intention of spreading and supporting that development.

In writing of the theatre, one is aware that this is only one aspect of the Arts, since the percentage of theatre supporters throughout the country is much smaller than realised, even though publicity may give the impression that theatre is in constant demand at every street corner. But the vitality in theatrical growth at both educational and entertainment levels has been, nevertheless, considerable and with this has gone a real search for totally acceptable standards.

The Arts Council has been central to maintaining this and Mr. Anthony Field, the finance adviser, is quite right when, commenting on the current financial situation, he speaks of 'the marg. being spread too thin'. It is perhaps significant that he doesn't refer to 'the butter'. But, by and large, there is too much bread and not enough to spread on it.

To most of us involved either in professional administration or training in the theatre, the greatest need is for some positive stabilisation of standards that is going to give British theatre the meaning and identity it clearly deserves. We've been talking about it for years—only to see the West End crumble, as we knew it would, into a mausoleum of bricks and mortar owners rather than theatrical entrepeneurs with flair. The great siege of mediocrity has finally won and, as Peter Shaffer would remind us, there are more Salieris than Mozarts to the square foot.

Thus, the consequent rise of the 'alternative theatre' was something that happened of necessity to the performing arts. Fringe theatre was born of two essentials: (a) a desire to perform and create exciting new material and attitudes within the profession for a dissatisfied rising generation of talent and (b) the need to combat the frustrations of an underemployed profession who regarded its system of play selection as sacrosanct and abiding by a set of theatrical principles that had changed

very little since the mid-fifties.

In the light of this, Drama schools were turning out an average number of performers fit for repertory, Theatre in Education and television to absorb and at the same time were realising that their professional expectation should be higher (hence the current accreditation argument now in full flood). Other areas of training (i.e. University Drama Departments) have objected to the closed shop of the Drama Schools who have been given their professional accreditation and Equity parity since they maintain that this lays down the law about identifying talent in a profession which needs to be flexible in its method of selection. Both these arguments have a great deal in them that reflect the ultimate problems of the professional theatre today—and in turn the upsurge of what may be regarded as revolutionary 'alternative theatre'.

The need to control entry into the profession by some means is clearly in the interest of all concerned, since the bottleneck of work is bound to get worse in a system that is already choked by the recession. The recent Arts Council cuts do not give much confidence to the scene but simply underline the fact that prestigious bodies like the Arts Council of Great Britain are being asked to implement the philistine thinking of a government that is looking at what is termed 'candle end' savings rather than creative policy making.

My visits to the theatre over the final months of 1980 have yielded a lot of work that covers performance at all levels. Both the standards and the choice of material have some bearing on the existing discussions about the spending of public money on subsidy in the field of sponsorship; but before itemising some of these productions it is perhaps better to take that pitiful 80 million pounds assigned to the Arts Council and see what is expected of it. Broadly speaking it is there to subsidise the entire creative output in 'Theatre, Ballet, Opera, Music, Painting, Exhibitions and Writing'—to name but the obvious categories—in one year.

What seems clear is that where certain aspects of these arts have established themselves beyond any doubt as to their excellence, and that their cultural contribution is one of national importance, the need for subsidy should be regarded as a separate Government grant direct from the Treasury, thus freeing the administration of the Arts Council to maintain and stimulate the creative area of the arts in less established organisations. An umbrella grant as a kind of giant-sized patron does very little more than aid and abet Mr. Field's 'marg' to be spread even thinner than usual.

Neither do we want to see these nationally accepted bodies having veiled threats of their subsidary grants being removed, as in the recent case of Sir Horace Cutler and his Greater London Council axe, wielded so noticeably with the flourish of a Mrs. Grundy and of course supported by that other indefatigable moralist, Mrs. Mary Whitehouse. If we *are* to have a National Theatre, it had better be made the direct responsibility of the state and the Arts Minister.

But how does all this affect the small fry of the alternative theatre? Release of major funding would of course help all the experimental

fields, but if the alternative theatre is looking for aid—as indeed it should —it should be sure of its standards. We are no longer interested in or tolerant of people who want to play with their plasticine in public—but are extremely interested if, whatever they do, they do well. We must recognise a simple fact in art—everyone has the right to fail but no one has the right to be a bore.

Belt and Braces Roadshow has proved, conclusively, that the best that can come from the fringe is far from boring. It has proved to be tremendously exciting and entertaining for the so-called 'West End' audience. Their production of *Accidental Death of an Anarchist*, which has taken over Wyndhams Theatre since the summer of 1980, shows that this rumbustical political satire stemming from the work of Dario Fo has something to say to the audiences of today, and Wyndhams must be one of the very few theatres that can honestly say their foyer is crowded with student ticket holders and the scramble for returned and cut-price tickets. The production exudes flair and daring in an unashamed flamboyance that brings the basic truth of Italian police corruption and its neo-fascism into focus. The wonderfully zany characterisation of Gavin Richards as the 'maniac' around which the plot revolves is a primary force to the show. Without his talent the play would crumple like old newspaper. He alone has managed to combine the style of Fo with the traditions of English stage farce.

But the advent of Dario Fo as a passionate leftist writer from Italy only works where the politics are big enough. At the Overground Theatre, Kingston, another Dario Fo piece entitled *We Can't Pay, We Won't Pay* is less effective both in substance and in its over-English production. The struggle of humanity to cope with the rising prices of everyday living is used as a platform on which domestic crime is examined by music hall policemen and the honesty of a working man who wants to live within the law, even though his wife is not averse to stealing from the local supermarket. When the play was over and the mixed audience of suburbia who had enjoyed the play were going home, the strangely silent streets of Kingston struck one as altogether wrong for the entertainment we had just witnessed. Yet the work of companies such as the Overground Theatre deserves all the support it can get. (The Arts Council have recently seen fit to cut its entire grant, apparently.)

The actual construction of many of the fringe theatres is beginning to form a pattern of similarity. Either 'end stage' or 'in the round' areas are created with tiered seating comfortably mounted on metal scaffolding. The Tricycle Theatre in Kilburn and the Half Moon Theatre in the Mile End Road are good examples. These theatres present themselves as thoroughly professional venues. And it is because of these high standards that the big London theatres are looking to the fringe work for the possible transfer and subsequent commercial success. This has happened most noticeably with the Bush Theatre's production of Tom Kempinski's brilliant two-hander, *Duet For One*, now at the Duke of York's Theatre, which stars the powerful persona of Frances de la Tour. When I visited the Bush Theatre, it wasn't difficult to imagine how *Duet*

*For One* had started its life there in the cosy atmosphere of the theatre over the pub. The concentration is entirely on the playing area, the technical equipment and the product. On the occasion of my visit The Bush were playing host to another well known touring fringe company, 'Hull Truck' in a new play entitled *Mean Streaks* by Alan Williams. The excellent acting in what proved to be a rather long behavioural comedy set in a Morecambe holiday chalet showed the 'mean streaks' that exist in all people who are struggling to find their own level of existence.

When the fringe theatre takes off into acting arias it works much better than when it contains itself in close quarter naturalism. We are, I think, arriving at the point where we want our actors to be larger than life—to carry us away with their words. We want language; and if it's the language of the streets or the brothels or the pubs or the bedsitters we want the personality to soar above its environment.

This was demonstrated in Nigel Williams' lopsided play, *Sugar and Spice,* which seemed a 'fringe' play but was put on in the main theatre of the Royal Court. Judging by its first act this play had all that was bright and huge about epic drama taking place on the hearthrug of banality.

Nigel Williams sets his play in a council flat off the Kings Road, Chelsea; cosy, compact and tasteless, run by an older slag, Suzie, who sips her drinks in a genteel way whilst remembering her past life in coarser detail. Pathetically lonely Suzie brings a group of punk rockers (female) into the 'apartment' for a drink. The Group, led by one Sharon, played by the abrasive and glittering Toyah Willcox, are soon into everything and enjoying themselves. Briefly, the play is an excuse for writing an operatic score round the abuse of the sexes and in particular the fierce attitude that protective people such as Sharon have for those of their friends who have been made pregnant in the past, creating a rage against the male sex which is almost equal to the revenges of Clytemnestra. A young man arrives at the flat; is enticed in and then stripped naked by the girls. Sharon smashes a whisky bottle and threatens his genitals with the jagged glass. Alas, all that developed were some bovver-booted skinheads who proceeded to carry out some sort of trial of the girls in the name of male chauvinism and their own self-evident impotency. The play ends with a ghastly accident in which the bottle finally gets used to draw blood from the original young man, who defends the naked girl against his skinhead chum.

Pondering on the future value of such plays as *Sugar and Spice* is not simply an academic pastime; it brings us right up to the minute with understanding why plays like this must be written here and now, and why writers like Nigel Williams are important to the social scene. Far less important is the fantasised, sleazy quality of revivals such as *Pal Joey,* transferred from the New Half Moon Theatre to the Albery. Surprisingly the New Half Moon followed this with another musical on its home ground—a totally unexciting production called *Dreamer,* in which the rise and fall of a likely lad off the Mile End road and his rich Tory cockney family in the rag trade is charted without talent. Experimental

small theatre cannot afford the mistake of general ineptitude when seeking to professionalise its grass roots.

The strength of the small committed theatre seems to lie in the kind of work I saw recently presented by a company called Paines Plough; (it originated at a pub called The Plough which served Paines beer). Paines Plough is now the resident company of the Arts Centre, University of Warwick, and have established a healthy touring programme which includes Cumbernauld, Lincoln, Hull, Doncaster and Grantham. Their new play, *Rise of the Old Cloud* by Mike Dorrell, first played at the Tricycle Theatre, Kilburn, is described as a study of a Welsh mining community during the 1930s. Coming at a time when so many memories are being stirred by the current unemployment crisis, the play etches the characters of the workless miners and their struggle with a grim reality that makes compulsive theatre watching.

*Rise of the Old Cloud* is an altogether more serious and earnest play than the intellectual virtuoso piece seen last year at the Lyric Studio, Hammersmith, (and soon to be televised) by David Pinner, who always promises to be a writer with something important to say. Pinner's recent play, *The Potsdam Quartet*, should be tested by playing to the same kind of audiences that will face Paines Plough. It might do the play a lot of good.

*The Potsdam Quartet* has a brilliant conception in using the background of the 1945 conference of Stalin, Churchill, Roosevelt and Attlee as a peg on which to hang the musical quartet who were engaged to play during the intervals of discussion. Fact becomes truthfully bizarre. As the musicians wrangle over their future and their homosexual and marital problems they are forever on the point of disintegration—like the Europe which is the backdrop to their impeccable playing of Haydn. David Pinner does not ask his audience to follow any logical progress in the play but rather to be aware of the dangers that surround us all in trying to live out our lives in the shadow of events over which we have no control.

The range of work being presented by the Alternative theatre is increasing; a public who hardly knew of its existence is now being wooed into its presence and there is every sign that they enjoy it; which is why the penny-pinching cuts in the Arts Council grants are such a nonsense. If theatre is to remain alive and cogent to the population, the authorities must look to what is succeeding and back it fully. The commercial theatre is already feeding off the produce—which has in turn been subsidised by the Arts Council. Dig up the roots and there will be no crops!

Conversely, 'subsidy' should not exist as an accolade for the common denominator of public taste (do we really expect Arts Council cash to support revivals of *My Fair Lady?*). The artistic discipline of the true Fringe theatre has only just arrived and it must be assisted, not allowed to be absorbed into a fatal morass of supermarketed performing animals.

# FRACTIONS OF THE GRAND DESIGN: MICHAEL ANDREWS AT THE HAYWARD GALLERY

## by Simon Passmore

A SENSE of order extending beyond any single canvas distinguishes the work of Michael Andrews, who was recently the subject of a major retrospective exhibition at the Hayward Gallery, on London's South Bank. Andrews paints with a tranquil and confident authority which is immediately attractive; the eye is led through 'The Colony Room I' (1962) to the central, sharply-focused features of Lucien Freud as firmly as through a Claude landscape to the luminous horizon. The painter's assured handling of ephemeral subjects—late-night party clowning, the mood of a deserted beach, a balloon's shadow—is the result of a wider vision presented only in fragments. This is shown most clearly in a painting of the gardens at Drummond Castle, titled 'Drummond: the Multi-coloured Parterre; Fractions of the Grand Design' (1977). In this a geometrical sketch of avenues and walks set with clipped trees invokes the formality of the landscape gardening tradition, yet has been infiltrated by four masked figures in the foreground, disguised respectively as bird, rabbit, ape and walrus. Convention is both described and disrupted in a way which refers the viewer out into another, wider world.

Andrews has often been criticised for the insularity of his pictures, yet most of the works in this impressive exhibition are similarly fractions of a grand design, and consistency is one of their striking features. It is significant that a picture shown as part of the Diploma Examination at the Slade in 1952, when Andrews was twenty-three, should still command attention and respect. 'A Man Who Suddenly Fell Over' employs simple formal arrangements, essentially between the horizontal mass of the falling man and the agonisingly tense vertical of the woman bystander, whose face and body are rigid with the shock of impact. The dark figure who is the subject of this anguish seems oddly detached from the miniature drama, somehow embarrassed by the indignity foisted upon him by his unreliable limbs. His expression of mild reproval urges that this is a minor event; such falls are awkward but not uncommon, and there is no reason to isolate them from the currents of life. The picture shows a fraction of experience in the intensity of its occasion, but also points to the wider context, the grand design. Michael Andrews has something in common with the anglicised American painter R. B. Kitaj, as Toni del Renzio pointed out (in *Art Monthly*, No. 42) when he grouped the two with Richard Hamilton as 'painters of ideas'. Kitaj, speaking of the substance from which art is expressed, once referred to 'that which one touches again and again, fashioning a piety of the imagination with the effrontery of repetition . . . which when fleshed or blooded in nature or in thought, will absorb all the meanings we discover'. This describes very well Andrews's own procedure in the 1960s and 1970s, painting in series so that half a dozen or so pictures cluster around a single image, repeated

and expanded several times: a party, a balloon, a school of fish, a deer stalk.

The earliest series, centred on the party, is in many ways the most complete and satisfying, perhaps because the subject is by its nature inclusive. One of the first party pictures is 'The Colony Room I' (1962), a group portrait of the regulars at Muriel Belcher's Soho drinking club where Francis Bacon and Lucien Freud held court, and which Andrews himself had decorated. Here the painter's intrusion into the strictly private entertainment is met by Lucien Freud's steady stare, while the figures in another picture of 1962, 'The Deer Park', are less conscious of the observer. In this instance the artist has made his way to the centre of the painting, and is shown immobilised at the end of a sofa. He has been given a definitive artistic identity, and the face which looks sulkily at the surrounding frivolity belongs to Rimbaud. A balcony overhead bears the weight of more revellers, while the picture window behind gives onto a vista of enclosed parkland and mountains beyond. Outside the deer feed, and the combination of humans and animals suggests not one but two endangered species. Only one, however, is protected, and it is not only the glossy shallow smiles of the women in cocktail dresses which are transient. The woman in green has already melted into the deer park behind her, and only the bright red lipstick and her elegant coiffure struggle to detach themselves from nature outside.

These themes are developed in the triptych 'All Night Long' (1963-4), which emphasises its fractional nature by its own division into three panels. The catalogue of party foolishness is more comprehensive than in 'The Deer Park', and includes a number of images appropriately derived from magazine photographs and advertisements: sunbathers, swimmers, 'Princess Birgitte removing her track suit,' horseplaying drunks, a Polynesian girl with what looks like a ukulele. The title concisely sums up the unremitting nature of the inanity, continuing all night long.

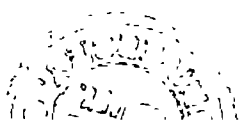
The strange, abnormal behaviour of parties is explored further in 'The Blue and Yellow of the Yacht Club' (1969), and from a different viewpoint in 'The Lord Mayor's Reception in Norwich Castle Keep . . .' (1966-9). This unsatisfying picture is based on a photograph of a formal occasion, but the unattractive guests have in some cases been rendered more unpleasant by overpainting the photographic image. If smart parties, coldly observed, are curious and unattractive affairs, then functions of this kind are still more repellent. The artist-observer had been immobilised in 'The Deer Park' and excluded from 'All Night Long'; in 'The Lord Mayor's Reception . . .' he is the object of several quizzical looks, as though the dinner-jacketed dignitaries were puzzled by his presence. These people are as coldly regarded by Andrews as the fish of later paintings, but seen through the glass of the local photographer's lens, rather than that of an aquarium.

The relationship between the various pictures called 'Lights' is clearer, as the series is known by a common title. 'Lights' I-VII follow the theme of a gas balloon carrying an observer's basket, from a vague inland

position 'Out-of-Doors' ('Lights I', 1970) to the coast. This provides Andrews with an aerial viewpoint, efficiently detaching the image of the balloon from the earth of party-goers while still forming a visual image which, like Kitaj's 'piety of the imagination,' can 'absorb all the meanings we discover.' It is rare to find an image so boldly and confidently delineated, at a time when the figurative mode has been thought bankrupt. Andrews's balloon hovers through changing scenes, now flapping loosely over Waterloo Bridge, now silhouetted against the blaze of night-time skyscrapers.

Often in 'Lights' the balloon is present implicitly, suggested by the aerial viewpoint rather than actually seen. This elevation encourages an observation of states rather than relationships: so that a large pier is seen hanging on the water as though resting on its own shadow, with no suggestion of supporting pillars. In the same way, car headlights and street lamps appear in 'Lights VI: The Spa' (1974) as almost autonomous existences, the cars and lamp-posts present only as the merest suggestion. The culmination of this tendency is 'Lights VII: A Shadow' (1974), the closest Michael Andrews comes to abstraction: a canvas divided almost into halves of blue and sand, cut by a thin line of pale surf. The shadow of a balloon lies portentously on the beach, next to a squirl of paint which seems to have strayed from a nearby abstract expressionist work. The canvas suggets Rothko, another artist who knew a great deal about organising paint so as to 'absorb all the meanings we discover.'

Yet although Andrews paints within a figurative convention, his figures themselves feature less and less often after the party paintings of the 1960s, in which most are anyway described with a feeling for their embodiment of a social norm rather than any individualism. The most recent pictures in this retrospective, taking for a common subject deer-stalking in Scotland, again extend their observation to humans, but in much the same way as in 'The Deer Park': there is not a great deal of distinction between the light brown deer and the hunters clothed in light brown tweed who stalk them. Faces are not seen in 'Peter's Day: 3rd Stalk' (1979), 'Alastair's Day: 2nd Stalk' (1980) or 'Alastair's Day: 2nd Stalk: 2nd Shot' (1980). In an earlier picture, a study for a head for 'Lights I' (1968), a woman's face is dappled like a deer's and antlers grow from her head. This is a repeated device in the earlier paintings, for example 'Liony Piony' (1956-7), where a naked woman assumes the stripes of a zebra as she lies under the predatory attention of a lion. There is a sense of Andrews's people being less than human; or the non-humans being more than animal. Thus in the various versions of 'Digswell Man' (c. 1958-9) which portray a retarded gardener, the subject emerges from thick impastos as though from some primal mud, and paint is applied with a generosity worthy of Frank Auerbach. A self portrait of the same period (1959) employs the same rich textural qualities. The last painting in this style is also a portrait, this time of Tim Behrens (1962). With a nod to Sickert and the Camden Town school, this is almost the last picture by Andrews to invite the viewer into it, the subject arrested and posed under his scrutiny. It is also one of the last in which



detail is confidently passed over, as in the fine portrait of 'Lorenza Mazetti in Italy' (1954), where fragments of architecture and a thinly-sketched man denote the background to Lorenza Mazetti herself, whose hands and feet are merely suggested.

The paintings of the 1960s are not more detailed, but more aware of the problems of detail. The earlier work seems impatient with delicate brushstrokes, favouring a big, robust style. 'The Blue and Yellow of the Yacht Club' (1969) is more sensitive to the limitations of perception, particularly that of the photographs Andrews has used throughout his career. Characteristically he turned incertitude to advantage, producing the urgent dash of 'The Blue and Yellow' and 'Portrait of J.K.', which suggest the hurried *paparazzi* photography of the Sunday newspapers. There is no loss of precision, but a change in the subject of that precision: movement in the 1960s paintings is repeatedly scrutinised, and faces often appear smeared, as though Bacon had influenced Andrews with his technique of using a towel or rag to make paint look temporarily displaced, like a blurred photograph.

A renewed confidence is evident in the pictures of the 1970s, however, and 'Melanie and Me Swimming' (1978-9) combines a detailed rendering of water in movement with a portrait of the child's anxious face. In this way the concerns of the two decades are successfully combined. Detail has become a surface characteristic with the use of a spray-gun, rather than a deep quality to be excavated from the canvas, as in the 'Digswell Man' pictures. And outside 'Melanie and Me Swimming', human concerns continue to be examined, though sometimes metaphorically, as in 'School'. This group of four pictures depicts in each case two separate groups of fish: unidentified in 'School I' (1977), pike and roach in 'School II' (1977), butterfly fish and damsel fish in 'School III' (1978), and barracuda under skipjack tuna in 'School IV' (1978). Again, states rather than relationships form the subject of the series: what relationships may exist between the pairs of species is not explicit. The important quality is difference, and in particular the difference between the brightly uniformed schools of fish and the single pike of 'School II', which acknowledges no relationship at all and functions, much like the Rimbaud figure in 'The Deer Park', as an isolated observer, a detached viewpoint.

It is this detachment which provides the apparently effortless authority with which Michael Andrews orders his images, which might look so cumbersome in other hands. It is this detachment, too, which permits him to make less diffuse statements than most abstract painters. But it is also responsible for making Andrews's grand design fragmented and slightly remote: a guest, whether invited or not, at the party of a stranger.

# LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

## QUARTERLY FICTION REVIEW

### by Rosalind Wade

*Arctic Summer and Other Fictions.* E. M. Forster. Edited by Elizabeth Heine. Edward Arnold. £18.50. *The Edinburgh Stories of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.* Introduction by Owen Dudley Edwards. Polygon Books. £3.95. *A Quest of Love.* Jacquetta Hawkes. Chatto & Windus. £6.50. *The White Hotel.* D. M. Thomas. Gollancz. £5.50. *The Second Chance.* Alan Sillitoe. Cape. £5.95. *Sisters.* Fiona Barr, Barbara Haycock Walsh, Stella Mahon. Blackstaff Press. £5.95.

The long careful work of editing E. M. Forster's complete works is continued with *Arctic Summer and Other Fictions,* Volume 9 of the Abinger edition. The collection includes fragments not often seen or commented on and the title indicates something of a mixed bag which might not be of outstanding interest. The very opposite is the case. In these writings, some though not all dating back to the beginning of Forster's career, are displayed an impressive understanding of human foible and frailty as well as skill in handling a number of different forms. The main complaint is that so many of the pieces are unfinished and it will never be known for certain how they might have developed. Inevitably the novella, 'Nottingham Lace', is the most satisfactory because it comes nearest to completion. Forster's own comment on it, to quote Rose Macaulay, is that it was written when he was 'about twenty years of age'. If so, it is a remarkably disciplined and mature study of the frustrations of extreme youth, told without melodrama or pent-up passion. This story of Edgar, a very young man who is virtually a prisoner in the home of relatives, is tense with the shock waves of extreme class consciousness. To quote Edgar's Aunt, Mrs. Manchett:

> From the moment that rosewood chair—you remember—came out of the van, I guessed the kind of people they would be. Then there was the dreadful malachite clock and the blue vases and their hair done in the most common style. Then the son carried in the mattress himself—most nice and kind: I am not saying it tells against him a bit—but it all shows. And now here are the curtains—Nottingham Lace. Come and look.

Although not by any means a pauper, Edgar endures minor humiliations at the hands of the Manchetts and suffers a cruel rebuff from his absentee father with philosophic acceptance of what cannot be altered. But there is much more to 'Nottingham Lace' than an examination of relationships between the generations or the psychology of snobbish attitudes, many of which are still discernible in our own contemporary society. It is, as are E. M. Forster's later novels, a study of the effect of confrontation between widely disparate human beings and the dilemma of whether to give battle or go under. In this case a concluding sentence, although incomplete, gives promise of Edgar's ability to strike out a line for himself.

With a short piece titled simply 'Short Story', social differences are displayed in a higher income bracket. In this entertaining episode, concerning the transportation of a pet dog from Cairo to Aboukir, the lack of a definitive conclusion is even more annoying, and the small, nebulous plot tends to take off in several conflicting directions.

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These two items are among the most interesting although some short unrelated pieces such as 'At the National Gallery' and 'From a Forthcoming Blue Book' are useful in revealing Forster's alternative styles. But the main impression which remains after a study of these often disjointed fragments is the Editor's devoted care and scholarship in unravelling difficult, unrevised passages and the value of her interesting and informative notes.

Fragments also are offered in *The Edinburgh Stories of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle*. Although the various items have all been published before they are not often included in the standard anthologies. The early pieces among them provide an opportunity to assess the author's life-long concern with the supernatural. 'John Barrington Cowles' and 'The Parasite' both grip the attention through a chilling revelation of a kind of paranoic wickedness which proves to be quite as alarming as the evil plotting in the famous, much later story, 'The Speckled Band'. In 'The Parasite' the victim is Professor Gilroy, who uses his journal as an instrument for communication. The power of a grotesquely crippled woman to impose her will on others through hypnosis is powerfully realised through this well-tried narrative device. Although less polished and controlled, 'John Barrington Cowles' is even more blood-curdling. Here, the blameless and not very enterprising Cowles is marked down by an outwardly desirable young woman who possesses the beckoning power of a sea-siren. Once she has willed the death of a former admirer there can be no escape. Conan Doyle never bettered the terrifying moment when Cowles dashes headlong to his death in a chilly sea, and into the arms of a Lorelei-like apparition.

Both E. M. Forster and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle were meticulously factual writers, with an unerring eye for relevant detail. Two recently published novels, *A Quest of Love* by Jacquetta Hawkes and *The White Hotel* by D. M. Thomas, provide a striking contrast from *Arctic Summer* and the *Edinburgh Stories*, for both are works deriving purely from the imagination, although Jacquetta Hawkes encompasses her study of re-incarnation down the centuries within an identifiable contemporary background. These sequences of an erotic progress evolve during sojourns in her own well maintained country garden, when she permits her spirit to float gracefully away to the earliest dawnings of civilisation: and on through Knossos and Ephesus to Henry du Blois and a period verging on our own times. The language of the individual pieces is varied in an attempt to re-capture intonation and sentence structure which, though no doubt accurate, makes for a somewhat staccato and unreal effect; but it is in Part VIII, the love story of Bishop Henry and lovable, enterprising Jaquet, that the wandering spirit who is destined to become the Jacquetta Hawkes takes on a coherent dimension. Remembering her passionate and unlikely affair with the famous and venerated man, Jaquet's narrative throbs with genuine emotion. Otherwise, the most arresting passages will be found in Jacquetta Hawkes' Foreword and Conclusion. These express so much personal wisdom and objectivity that the reader is left wishing for more.

The theme of *The White Hotel* is equally unusual although more obscure. The novel opens with a long, erotic poem. D. M. Thomas' approach to his subject is many-faceted and considerable concentration is required to isolate his basic scheme of a fictionalised case-history. This concerns the mental collapse and subsequent psychiatric treatment by Sigmund Freud of an opera singer, which is sufficiently successful to enable her to take up work again. The patient's progress and set-backs are conveyed through short, disconnected scenes which give a credible impression of the traumas of a disordered mind. In many ways, the fantasy is more interesting than the fact, although the

realities make more painful reading. Because she is the widow of a Jewish musician, the singer and her step-child are trapped in the outrage that came to be known as 'Babi Yar'. Much has been written and spoken about the rounding up of helpless people, the stripping and robbing and cold-blooded killing which followed, yet no account can be more horrifying than D. M. Thomas' description of the dragging hours and what came after them. Many novelists would have been defeated early on by the chosen theme and manner of its presentation, if indeed they would ever have had the courage to embark upon it; but by the urgent, claustrophobic power of his prose and absolute conviction in working the theme through to its horrifying conclusion, D. M. Thomas makes sure that his third novel is one that should not be missed.

A sense of disappointment is the feeling uppermost after reading Alan Sillitoe's *The Second Chance and Other Stories.* The background for the eleven stories, some brief, others more ample, is his native Nottinghamshire. It is a varied assortment, but does not seem to show any noticeable advance on the successful novels of his early youth, *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* and *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner.* Sometimes the actual course of the stories is hard to follow, as for instance in 'The Meeting' when an apparently casual encounter between strangers turns out to be a meeting between two people who have been divorced. Again, 'Confrontation' is about a fortuitous 'getting-together', yet the outcome seems unclear and rather rushed. Happier examples are 'A Time to Keep' which works up to be a convincing study of discontented adolescence and 'The Fiddle', effective as a kind of sketch or vignette, even if it does not arrive at any special conclusion. Perhaps the most successful story in the collection is 'No Name in the Street', a humorous and perceptive account of an unattached misfit who decides to end his solitary existence by moving in with a blowsy, demanding female, although she seems unlikely to offer better company than his mongrel dog. The animal's stubborn and effective resistance to the 'move' is supremely comic; but, although 'No Name on the Street' is more entertaining and definitive than some of the stories in *The Second Chance,* it works on the same consistently minor key; perhaps because this particular Midlands region is not invested with the warmth and scenic beauty of—for instance—Yorkshire or the West Country, or the stimulus of a metropolis.

And finally, more short stories, four each by three Irish women writers, Fiona Barr, Barbara Haycock Walsh and Stella Mahon. They are all concerned with life in Ireland, yet the approach of each writer is very different. Fiona Barr's 'Sisters' is an account of the persecution by a sexually warped nun of a young girl at the time of puberty. The detail of convent life is wonderfully actual and convincing. 'Tuesday Night' by Barbara Haycock Walsh is a more brutal affair. She takes a tough, uncompromising line with her study of marital stresses as seen through the bewildered eyes of a child. Stella Mahon's unvarnished account of a birth in primitive conditions in 'A Family Occasion' is an almost unbearably painful example of stark reportage. But she can be seen in a lighter vein in a witty if sober little tale of a seven-year-old girl's incursion into the adult world of politics.

**Also Received:**

*Voyovic And Other Stories.* Niall Quinn. Wolfhound Press. £5.94.

Strong talent is displayed by Niall Quinn in handling a series of generally related stories mainly about the important and topical situation of migrant workers in various parts of Europe.

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*Captives And Other Short Stories.* F. D. Sheridan. Irish Co-operative Writers. £5.95.

The Dublin-based Irish Co-operative continue to promote their fiction section vigorously. F. D. Sheridan is a perceptive, imaginative writer although some of the stories are too slight and do not work through to any very definite climax.

*Joshua Then and Now.* Mordecai Richler. Macmillan. £5.95.

The outstandingly successful Mordecai Richler has provided yet another outsize novel likely to make an even greater appeal than *St. Urbain's Horseman* and *The Acrobats.* The elaborate and closely plotted 'progress' of Joshua Shapiro is a vehicle very well suited to display Mordecai Richler's particular talents for narrative and characterisation.

*The Clan of the Cave Bear.* Jean M. Auel. Hodder & Stoughton. £4.95.

*The Cave of the Clan Bear* represents an amazing feat for the author, Jean M. Auel, for she turned quite deliberately to novel-writing after a varied and colourful career in totally different occupations. All the more remarkable that instead of drawing on these she elected to devote her first novel to a study of forgotten tribes roaming Europe before even a glimmer existed of civilisation as we know it. Inevitably Jean Auel encounters the problems of interpreting just how these long-forgotten people would actually think and speak. The focus point is Ayla, and her curious attachment to a tribe foreign to her own physical structure and experience. Admittedly, it is over long and not always convincing, yet it has a curious and at times irresistible compulsion.

## NON-FICTION REVIEWS

### YEAR OF DECISION

*Face The Future.* David Owen. Jonathan Cape. £12.50.

I congratulate Dr. Owen on producing a thoughtful and comprehensive guide to the new Social Democratic Party at exactly the right moment. The word *comprehensive* is used advisedly because the book embraces theory and practice, economics and government, social and foreign policy. The writer has obviously read widely, as the twelve pages of notes indicate. He also displays a good working knowledge of the history of the Labour Party. I can speak quite objectively because I left the Party seven years before he was born and was the Minister responsible for Education in the year he was born, 1938.

The book is over 500 pages long and must have been written and published in record time; yet there is no evidence of hasty or superficial conclusions. Take one example, *Electoral Reform,* not quite at random, because being the only remaining person elected to Parliament (via the Universities) by Proportional Representation, I know something about the subject. He writes: 'the question of electoral reform will be resolved by the presence of power politics, not by merit or constitutional theory about coalitions or the two party system'. He then envisages a situation where some thirty MPs of a new party combined with the Liberals to give them the balancing power; if then that balancing power insisted on a referendum which in turn voted for a specific system of proportional representation, 'it is hard to see how the referendum proposition could be refused by parliament. It is possible that it may occur in 1984 and is certainly more likely than that electoral reform will come about

as a result of logical argument and persuasion'. That is an example of realism. Other examples could be quoted from his attitude on Defence and European Policy: clearly he could not sit in the same Cabinet as Michael Foot or Peter Shore, let alone Wedgwood Benn.

Dr. Owen strongly criticises the collectivist, centralist tradition within the Labour Party, favoured and enunciated by the Webbs and Stafford Cripps—in a word, the bureaucratic corporate state, buttressed by massive Trade Unions and multi-national companies. Like Cole and Crosland and Gaitskell before him, he is a de-centraliser, whether in economic or local government policy; he wants a genuine mixed economy, with far more consideration for the citizen, whether as consumer, producer or local government elector. But why has not this aspect of politics received more attention within the Labour party? My own answer is that during eleven years of Labour administration—interrupted only by Mr. Heath's unsuccessful premiership—the Labour Party has, firstly, engaged in a minimum of genuine research and re-thinking and, secondly, been thoroughly infiltrated via local parties and local trade unions. Hence the current malaise, where even the Deputy-Leader can be shouted down. Dr. Owen and his friends must share some responsibility for past inaction even if they have now bravely moved out to create a new party.

As Dr. Owen knows, the British Labour Party, due mostly to historical reasons, is unique in having close and organic relations with the trade union movement, which is in turn its pay master. Mr. Moss Evans, head of the Transport and General Workers, with a two million membership, finances twenty members of parliament and obliges them to present monthly reports. Dr. Owen and his friends have resigned from the Labour Party, partly because of its subservience to the massive block votes of organised labour. Both he and the Liberals have not yet found a sufficiently large natural base; they will need a much clearer definition of their attitude to the fact of Trade Union power. Amidst many excellent and necessary items of reform The Social Democrats and Liberals have yet to build a national base on a class-less basis for the millions who did not vote Labour in 1979 and who are looking for radical initiatives rather than sitting on some middle ground.

The weak aspect of an otherwise courageous book and a masterly survey of potential political policies is, oddly enough, an absence of realism. Perhaps some of the economic analysis is lacking in depth. But as Lesek Kolakowski writes, with Dr. Owen's approval, 'the trouble with the social democratic idea is that it does not stock and does not sell any of the ideological commodities which various totalitarian movements—Communists, Fascists or Leftists—offer dream-hungry youth.' The answer cannot be just better research, that is always available. What really matters is political personality, the genius of leadership, matched with a 'dream-hungry', yes, and also with a national consumer electorate—in plain language with the people.

KENNETH LINDSAY

## A BASIC BOOK

*British Government and its Discontents.* Geoffrey Smith and Nelson W. Polsby. Harper & Row Ltd. £7.79.

As an example of Anglo-American co-operation this work has distinct advantages for it shows how others see us as well as our perception of ourselves. Equally, the comparison with American society and its Institution is helpful. The attractive feature of what is aptly published under the general

heading 'basic books' is that it is compact, easily read and yet highly perceptive in its analysis of the current malaise.

Moreover, it is remarkably well balanced in the analysis. It is never pretentious but it somehow manages to embrace the fundamental issues that British Society needs to tackle. There is a psychological dimension in the difficulty of coming to terms with a post-Imperial, post-war Britain that had always ranked among the super powers but is now excluded from the Summit. Mrs. Thatcher's recent utterances are not discussed but they demonstrate the nostalgia for a kind of power on the international scene of which we long ago ceased to be capable. As the authors point out, Britain can still play an important diplomatic role with its circles of Commonwealth, E.E.C. and the Atlantic Alliance and long experience. That is very different from rattling sabres that have rusted in their scabbards.

This is not a book of reference nor is it for the sophisticated economist or political scientist seeking research in depth on specialised topics. Its merit is the breadth of research, the choice of topics and the fair presentation of them in their historical context. If some of this seems tedious it is probably because the audience to whom it is addressed will be largely overseas and more particularly American. The tables and references in the appendices show a familiarity with statistical information and modern thought that finds its way into a free flowing text.

The tendency to fragmentation in the Northern Ireland conflict and Nationalist sentiment in Scotland and Wales provide a splendidly compact account written in a non-partisan manner. The suggestion for another look at political institutions, open government and electoral system mirror my own preoccupation published elsewhere.

The relatively homogeneous nature of British Society contrasts with broad differences of speech and tradition within 300 miles—a fact that must amaze Americans. Thus, the introduction of new Commonwealth Immigrants on a scale relatively much smaller than the numbers of American black and other ethnic groups has created a much greater stir than they would expect. The relatively greater Trade Union power in Britain; the limited role of Parliament contrasted with Congress and a muted optimism in the midst of a fairly grim picture of Britain's relative decline are all facets of the various well selected chapters.

Each is an essay in itself, as is the analysis of the political parties. Many important issues such as housing, education, health or transport are not covered since they are by-products of more fundamental problems of structure. In dealing with these central themes it is gentle rather than scathing, instructive rather than didactic and its very careful approach makes it all the more convincing. Teachers in particular could make good use of this book with students not content to feed on platitudes.

PAUL ROSE

## THE PALACE OF WESTMINSTER

*Westminster: Palace and Parliament.* Patrick Cormack. Warne. £9.95.

It is no easy task to produce a guide to the working of Parliament in some 150 pages. But Patrick Cormack's *Westminster: Palace and Parliament* is a readable and attractive introduction to its subject. As a member of the best club in Europe, who is himself chairman of the All Party Parliamentary Heritage group, he has a special affection for the Palace that is also a workshop of over 1,000 rooms (and—he might have added—of at least 10 bars, if

my memory recalls aright). He is vivid on the great fire of 1834 out of which the Victorian building of Barry's fanciful recreation emerged. He is equally good on how the place works, aided here by some splendid illustrations. It is a piece of writing that is warm and evocative. He is right to say that the place does have a peculiar power of eliciting affection in all privileged to serve there. It is of course under pressure. Mr. Cormack refers to the Norman Shaw Building across the road where some 200 M.P.s have their offices, and to the fact that as recently as 1930 there were only two typewriters in the House. The pressures on it increase with every working day, and in contrast with its European and American counterparts it seems still both gentlemanly and amateur. But if only as a piece of nostalgia this is a splendid survey of a unique institution.

ESMOND WRIGHT

## THE CHURCH OF THE ENGLISH PEOPLE

*Christian England.* David L. Edwards. Collins. £7.95.

This is a masterly piece of historical writing by the Dean of Norwich whose previous appointments at King's College, Cambridge and Westminster Abbey have all contributed to a book of outstanding merit. It begins with the England before the English, and ends with Sir Thomas More at the peak of England's faith and culture, and the signs of the Reformation.

What Dean Edwards has done is to survey the English religious scene before the sudden storm of reform began to blow which shook the English monarchy as well as its church, its social customs, its language and literature. It is the story of a thousand years of English Christianity with a prelude by the Romans and the Celts. It is also a splendidly written account of the years which had an English culture even before the English themselves started making one!

The author keeps a weather eye open for the reader who is ignorant of the Romans and the Celts even more than he is of the Anglo-Saxons and William the Conqueror. 'Those who find it impossible' he says, 'to accept Christianity's doctrinal claims and find much that is dubious in its traditional ethics, can still be enriched by entry into the experience of the very long period when to be English (or European) automatically meant to be a member of the Christian Church'.

The second part of the book deals with the new England that developed following the Norman conquest, and the search for a monarch who would be a Christian ruler with Archbishop Anselm and the monks of Bec Abbey in Normandy, all helping in the quest.

These European contacts, which have so many relevances today, shaped an England which destined it for European leadership. Dean Edwards is specially good on the era of the Great Charter, and is even eloquent and persuasive on the marital problems of Henry VIII, an exceedingly difficult assignment for an Anglican churchman.

In spite of many doubtful characters and shady events, these Middle Ages of English Christianity were, as Dean Edwards calls them, 'The Age of Faith'.

This was the great church building era as well as the expansion of the monasteries and convents. Bishops grew fat and rich and abbots ruled their communities with style and authority. It was the time of friars and pilgrims, of chivalry and much physical cruelty in the name of Christian faith, as well as private and public charity.

Then the storm which became the Reformation started to blow. The headlines of the book show Dean Edwards style:

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CECIL NORTHCOTT

## DIVINE DISCONTENT

*God's Fifth Column: a biography of the age: 1890-1940* by William Gerhardie, edited and with an introduction by Michael Holroyd and Robert Skidelsky. Hodder and Stoughton. £11.95.

William Gerhardie's last book, finished in 1942 and appearing in Methuen's list for that year but not then published, has been retrieved and skilfully edited by Michael Holroyd and Robert Skidelsky. In their admirable introduction the editors describe the difficult and fascinating task of trying to identify, amidst a welter of revisions and recastings, the final form which the author intended. Gerhardie himself left a note that his book 'was first completed in 1942, and was subsequently, after acceptance and appearance in the catalogue, withdrawn at my request for revision'. He seems, then, to have negotiated for its return and thereafter, during a long retreat into isolation which lasted until he died in 1977, to have struggled intermittently to condense and improve his original version. Already, before submitting the manuscript to Methuen, he had written 'I am at once the slave of art and of finance . . . It's pretty good, but it could be a lot better and anyhow is not at all what I intended it to be and which it could be if I had ten years to write it in'. How much was added, in the silent thirty-five remaining years of his life, cannot be guessed.

It is, however, now clear that Gerhardie's intention was to bring into moral focus and into perspective the events of the fifty years between 1890 and 1940, not by echoing professional historians' assessments of monarchs, statesmen and generals but by showing the effects on 'suffering humanity' of their brutal calculations,—'the calculations of the insane', as he calls them. The book is therefore a work of history, presented ironically: it is also a work of philosophy, serious in import but light in touch, whose propositions and aphorisms are fleshed out by means of biographical sketches, bringing in as exemplars not only statesmen and monarchs but also social leaders (surprisingly, Margot Asquith), poets and dreamers. To Gerhardie, the spiritual Fifth Column inherent in the lives and work of artists, who celebrate the miracle of being and feeling, is continually trying to sabotage the rash, pragmatic, unwitting egotism of those leaders of men who perceive their destiny in terms of the 'heroic' sacrifice of those they lead. The epitome of all such leaders is Hitler: but others before him are, in their various ways, similarly 'men of action', unable to be swayed by feeling or reflection, themselves lacking both attributes. There is not only William II of Germany, against whose destructive assertion his apparently powerful mother, the Empress Frederick, was truly impotent, but also even Goethe, in his capacity of prince rather than poet, succumbing to the charm of 'ideally' healthy, patriotic manhood as seen in the youthful, aristocratic English travellers to the Europe of his day. There are brilliant miniatures of Alexander III, Bismarck, John Morley, F. E. Smith, the posturing Curzon, Balfour (credited by Margot Asquith with literary genius), Chamberlain, William Jennings Bryan, as well as of D. H. Lawrence, Wilde, Zola, Froude and Kipling (along with other romantic imperialists).

The beautifully described deathbed scenes of Tolstoy, Chekhov and Proust supply themes that inform and permeate the book.

These themes, a celebration of man's desire to live privately and at peace, yet require both poet and prophet to depict and judge temporal events in the light of universal, eternal truth. To Gerhardie, Tolstoy, part poet and part prophet, rings the truest note in his insistence on the real needs and concerns of suffering humanity compared with the 'unworldly' ambitions of statesmen. Nevertheless, he does not miss the comedy, tragic though its results were, of Tolstoy, the apostle of love, fleeing from the ministrations of his wife. Proust's recollections, especially in *Le Temps Retrouvé*, of timeless moments which involuntarily return as the poignant feel of worn kerb-stones in Venice or the scent of bee-plundered flowers in the sun, seem to Gerhardie true intimations of immortality. But he does not fail to point out that Proust's idea of confronting 'nature' involved being driven in a closed car, muffled in furs, to observe the hawthorn blossom through a pane of glass.

In the final chapter, Gerhardie envisages a universal demand for a new world arising from 'the self-satisfied physiognomy of the Age during the last five decades, foaming at the mouth in the present sixth . . . What kind of a world is it to be?' He sees something that has not by any means as yet shown signs of happening—a world-wide recognition of the follies of nationalism, of the destructive power of warring economic systems and of the falsity of materialistic gods. It is, perhaps, his final irony. But to read his book is a rewarding experience.

BETTY ABEL

## CONRAD'S DOMESTIC BACKGROUND

*Joseph Conrad: Times Remembered.* John Conrad. Cambridge University Press. £10.50.

Joseph Conrad's only surviving son has written an unpretentious, loyal yet sensitive memoir of the period from 1909, when he himself was aged three, to 1924, the year of his father's death at the age of sixty-six. This Conrad beached inside the pale of rented rural houses, is no longer an exotic adventurer, but has undergone a petrification into an Edwardian *pater familias*. He has subjected himself to a rigid containment, but the tensions still crackle and bulge. John Conrad observes in one of his infrequent interpretations that Christmas was sparsely celebrated in the Conrad household, not, as in the Gosse household, for doctrinal reasons, but because 'in retrospect it seems that the aim was not to let anything interrupt our existence.' And so Conrad kept within the boundaries of his gardens, only gladly venturing forth aboard the succession of early motor-cars—each a kind of surrogate ship—always thirsting for an eminence from which the sea could be viewed. An excursion to Deal in 1919 and voyages in the English Channel brought about such a wistful yearning that his wife actually feared for his departure over the horizon.

Conrad contrived a savage separation of his family life from his creative life: John Conrad remarks that 'his literary life was very much his private preserve as far as the family was concerned', and he discussed his work only occasionally with his wife. He wrote late at night while the household slept. Nonetheless, he enjoyed the company of friends and eagerly anticipated their arrival—Arthur Symons, Norman Douglas, Edward Garnett, R. B. Cunningham Graham, John Galsworthy, Hugh Walpole and Ford Madox Hueffer, who was not so popular. Although Cunningham Graham, for example,

probably provided background material for the setting of Costaguana in *Nostromo* (1904), one does not get the impression that social intercourse was *essential* to Conrad's creative process, and to that extent he answers to the stereotype of the solitary exile. It is fascinating to learn that the friend with whom he most discussed his work was Arthur Marwood, a farmer, which amply illustrates E. M. Forster's well-known comment that Conrad was concerned not with a creed, but 'only opinions, and the right to throw them overboard when facts make them look absurd.'

Stress manifested itself in two ways which are constant patterns of his son's recollection. Conrad was extremely, eccentrically, and sometimes unfairly choleric. He was mildly obsessional and ritualistic. Neatness and cleanliness were the order of the day. The routine of the household was strictly shipshape, but there was a benevolence; his servants or 'crew' as he thought of them (and nautical language or allusion was a daily commonplace) were treated humanely, just as he describes in *A Personal Record* the 'simple fellowship and honourable reciprocity of services' and the 'special regard for the rights of the unprivileged of this earth' which characterised 'the mental and moral atmospheres' of the houses which sheltered his 'hazardous childhood'.

There were tyrannies, but John Conrad's childhood appears to have been happy. He emphasises how secure he felt and he was always sure of the anxious concern of his father. Yet it was not like Philip Gosse's 'too anxious love'.

The qualities which Conrad demanded of him—'I must justify my existence on this earth, be honest with myself and with all men, be confident but not conceited'—were not excessively demanding and are as 'misty' as Forster's perception of Conrad's 'philosophy'. There was no 'clash of two temperaments', because the father's was the dominant one. John fulfilled a function and a need as a relief from the intolerable tension of his father's arduous lucubrations. Thus, John would be roused from sleep at midnight for a game of chess, until the pen began to scratch again.

Because Conrad secluded his literary life from his family hearth, and because John Conrad was too young to appreciate what he did hear of conversation with friends, these filial recollections have obvious limitations and probably do not add to a great deal to our understanding of Conrad's creative processes. Even so, this is the domestic background against which Conrad's later, and arguably less impressive, works were executed. We are not shown the formation of Conrad's personality, which was already firmly crystallised by the time of John's birth, but that personality itself dominates every page; its opposition would have been cataclysmic.

MOLLY TIBBS

## A NEW BIOGRAPHY OF DOROTHY L. SAYERS

*Dorothy L. Sayers: the Life of a Courageous Woman.* James Brabazon. Gollancz. £9.95.

Dorothy Sayers, who died in 1957, stipulated: no biography, please, for fifty years. Mr. Brabazon need not apologise for jumping the gun, for it had already been jumped elsewhere. Mr. Anthony Fleming, her son by a lover, has given him access to valuable letters by her and other material. He is able to draw upon an undated MS., *My Edwardian Childhood,* and an abandoned, anonymous autobiography, *Cat o' Mary.* He treats intimate events in her life with a new psychological depth.

For example, her early intimacy with travel writer Eric Whelpton. They met at Oxford in adjacent lodgings when Eric was a shell-shocked ex-war officer. Novelist Doreen Wallace was present when he 'fainted away in Dorothy's sitting room, and she nursed his head and cooed over him'. After he went to teach at the French Eton, L'Ecole des Roches at Verneuil, he invited her to join him there in a scheme for exchanging English and French schoolboys—and first had to be vetted by her bourgeois parents. How far did the friendship go?

On one of my visits to Eric at Rye, Sussex, after Janet Hitchman published her earlier biography, *Such a Strange Lady*, I found him gleefully amused by the noddings and nudges by Rye's gossipy dames who assumed he had an affair with her and served as model for Lord Peter Wimsey, the blue-blooded sleuth. He guffawed at the idea, but conceded in his autobiography, *The Making of an Englishman*, that she was in love with him and evidently too forthcoming at times. Though aware of her finer points, she was no Venus, rather a Psyche with a dash of Calypso. The friendship ebbed when, visiting London, he fell heavily for another woman and poor Dorothy had to handle her constant letters. Later she went down with *mumps*, a most unromantic anticlimax, but had for solace the start of the Wimsey novels that brought her fame.

A subsequent affair at 28 with John Cournos, a Russian Jewish writer, was much stormier. He was 'an epitome of the philosophers of the Bloomsbury bedsitters' trying his luck with free love. She loved him, wanted marriage and babies; he neither, but freedom to love 'naturally'. On the rebound she gave herself to 'a poor devil whom I chummed up with one week-end, finding him left lonely', his bankrupt job being motors. Scornfully she wrote Cournos 'If you'd wanted me, you'd have taken me. The Beast did, to do him justice'. He gave her a child whom she lodged discreetly with a cousin at Oxford. When she duly married Oswald Atherton Fleming, son of an Orkneys Customs officer, motoring correspondent, the boy was adopted and took his name.

Mr. Brabazon traces with sympathy the subsequent theologian, Christian exponent, author of *The Man Born to be King, The Zeal of the House, The Mind of the Maker*. Not all his conjectures and conclusions are feasible, but all Peter Wimsey fans will want to read this acutely perceptive biography, to be published April 23rd, with Foreword by P. D. James.

TREVOR ALLEN

# SHORTER REVIEWS

**Whose Jerusalem?** (Muller. £9.95). Mr. Terence Prittie precedes his answer to the title's question with an historical survey of Jerusalem, giving particular emphasis to the years after the first world war. It is written from the Jewish standpoint, with which he is clearly most in sympathy. On the other hand he accepts in religious terms at least the importance of the city to Arab and Christian. He argues that since the 1967 war Jerusalem has been united and must never again be divided or become a separate entity under United Nations control. It must for ever remain part of Israel. On the other hand the government of Israel should give up administrative control. Jerusalem would be governed by a Council elected by all its residents, Jews and Arabs alike. Within the greater Jerusalem would be boroughs related to the Jewish and Arab settlement areas responsible for housing and settlement only. The Israeli

government need not worry about any loss of sovereignty over the city. 'As it happens, there is a built-in Jewish majority in Jerusalem, which is the real gauge of Israeli sovereignty in an area of dispute'. One can hardly expect the Arabs to agree to this situation. Mr. Prittie contends that the Jews were conciliatory to the Arabs after winning the 1967 war. He concedes, however, that the Jewish authorities have been insensitive in some building, clearance and settlement projects. He does not justify the destruction of the Arab homes and expulsion of the inhabitants opposite the Wailing Wall immediately after the end of the 1967 war, to make way for an open square. Mr. Prittie condemns the recent Jerusalem Law, declaring the city to be capital of Israel as unnecessary and provocative. Equally he criticises Mr. Begin's announcement in August 1980 that the Prime Minister's Office would be moving to an Arab area in East Jerusalem, which involves the eviction of three Arab families. Such measures make Mr. Prittie's basic argument of Jewish reasonableness to Arabs in Jerusalem unconvincing. The volume contains a brief Foreword by Teddy Kollek who has been Mayor of the undivided Jerusalem since 1967, and who is genuinely anxious for reconciliation between his people and the Arabs. The book contains some useful diagrams and maps, as well as some photographs.

**Beyond the Information Given** (George Allen & Unwin. £5.95). At a first glance the twenty-seven articles by Jerome S. Bruner here collected may bewilder by an apparent disparateness; but, as the volume's editor, Jeremy M. Anglin, emphasises, the key to the proper understanding of the significance of the work is the perception of the fundamental and unifying theme which is Bruner's concern with the process of knowing, with man's treatment of information, and how he contrives to go beyond it to achieve insight, understanding and competence. These studies in psychology cover a wide field, ranging from the perception of a tachistoscopic flash, through the attainment of an artificial concept in the laboratory, to the mastery of a course of study: from the acquirement of manual skill in infancy to the achievement of adult creativity and the development of complex scientific theory. In short, each of these articles demonstrates an aspect of Bruner's research into cognition, development, and education as a unified whole. The editor's arrangement of the sequence of the material is carefully calculated so as to provide a logical progression, illustrating the uses to which information is put 'inward', which is to say perceptual recognition followed by the constructions involved in building those apprehended bricks into the higher mental processes, and 'outwards', to convert knowledge into action. The practical advantage of Bruner's theoretical constructs is especially remarked in relation to the nature and techniques of education, which makes this book invaluable not only for psychologists, but also for teachers, educationalists, doctors, biologists, sociologists and all who are interested in child development. (R.W.E.).

**The Woodlanders** (Penguin Books. £1.25). Thomas Hardy's novel has now been published in the Penguin English Library paperback series. This edition is set from Hardy's 1912 text, subject to two minor literals which Hardy requested. Professor Ian Gregor has contributed a sympathetic appreciation in his Introduction. As he writes, perhaps more than anything else, it is the woods themselves that sustain the mood of the novel! It is edited by James Gibson who includes Notes on the text. There is also, usefully added, Hardy's General Preface to the 1912 Wessex Edition.

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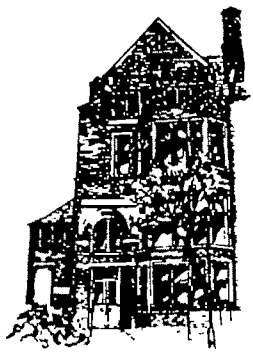

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# Contemporary Review

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May 1981 Vol. 238 No. 1384

## DOCTORS AND THE MOUNTING PERIL OF NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION

### by J. A. Loraine

IN 1976 the renowned explorer Jacques-Yves Cousteau addressed the UN General Assembly. He reflected that atomic power had 'reshaped what we may fear, what we may dream, how we live, and how we may die'. The words were not only elegant but prophetic stressing, as many others before him had done, that since 6 August 1945, when the 14 kiloton 'Little Boy' was unloaded over Hiroshima and the nuclear Pandora's box thereby unlocked, a totally new world came into being. Mankind had now acquired a fiendish potential for self destruction; *homo sapiens* was now an endangered species living on borrowed time, and since 1945 the sands of survival have been slowly yet ineluctably running down in the glass.

The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute was established in 1956 to commemorate Sweden's 150 years of uninterrupted peace. SIPRI is now the recognised watchdog on the global armaments race; and for years it has been proclaiming with ever increasing urgency and desperation that the spread of 'peaceful' nuclear technology around the planet is opening the floodgates to the manufacture of atomic weapons on a gargantuan scale.

During the next 20 years nuclear proliferation will almost certainly come to dominate and overshadow all other global issues. Radioactive material, mainly in the form of plutonium, will continue to drift round the world in a seemingly aimless manner. Every year the nuclear market place will become more anarchic; every year the atomic arsenals accumulated by the nuclear weapons powers will become even more formidable. The Eighties and Nineties are likely to witness the remorseless accumulation of warlike nuclear devices by all and sundry—by paranoid leaders of nations nursing hate and resentment as rubrics of their diplomacy, by nations of differing ideologies, differing colours and different creeds; by terrorists, malefactors and saboteurs of all kinds committed to violence for the furtherance of their aims and determined that only by an eruption of ferocity can the *status quo* be radically altered.

Since 1954 about one country a year has installed atomic plants. According to SIPRI in 1979 234 reactors were shared by 22 countries and 120,000 megawatts of electricity were being generated in this way. The USA was in the lead with 69 plants, the UK had 32, the USSR 30,

Japan 21, France 16, Federal Germany 15 and Canada 10. A further 227 reactors were under construction globally, designed to generate 206,000 MW. The USA had 88 being built, France 21, the USSR 18, Canada 14, Japan 11. SIPRI projects that by 1981 there will be 365 reactors in 28 countries producing 234,000 MW; by 1985 the corresponding numbers will be 405,350 and 300,000. By 2000 AD if nuclear migration is permitted to continue at anything like the present rate, 57 countries could be generating 1 million MW of electricity in this way.

At the root of the nuclear imbroglio is, of course, the inability to divorce the peaceful from the military use of the atom. Nations have always wished to promote the civilian atom and to derive advantages therefrom particularly in terms of higher material living standards; on the other hand they have cowered under the threat of the atom's military potential. This duality has been mirrored in all the elliptical dialogue, the equivocation and obfuscation which have characterised international discussions over the past 35 years. The divorce between the two aspects has never been established. Instead, both the warlike and the peaceful atom have proliferated as our technical knowledge, far from promoting reassurance, has merely increased fear and feelings of insecurity.

Another feature, which SIPRI has repeatedly stressed, is that for an individual nation state to 'go nuclear' is not a matter of great difficulty. Given the political will nuclear materials can be readily obtained on a flourishing black market, and here—and particularly to those of us involved in medicine—the analogy of drug trafficking is especially apposite. We have been singularly unsuccessful in preventing the widespread dissemination of compounds like heroin and cocaine. Can we have any assurance that we shall be any more successful in the case of plutonium?

At the time of writing there are six 'official' nuclear weapons powers —the USA, the Soviet Union, the UK, France, China and India. The last mentioned is especially instructive. By the explosion of a 15-kiloton device in the Rajasthan Desert in 1974, India gained accession to the nuclear club through the use of plutonium supplied by Canada for the construction of atomic reactors disingenuously described as 'peaceful'. But this detonation had global effects of transcendent significance for it demonstrated with blinding clarity that even an impoverished, grossly disadvantaged Third World country could become a nuclear weapons power if the political will existed to propel her along this road.

In 1981 the nuclear restraints which have operated since Hiroshima and Nagasaki are visibly crumbling, and denuclearisation seems as dead as last week's mutton. We are now witnessing a new phenomenon—the emergence of what are coming to be known as the 'nearly nuclear' nations and there are several in this category.

Pakistan holds pride of place here. The nuclear ambitions of the country were rooted in the dreams of the former Prime Minister, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who once asserted that the people of Pakistan would 'offer any sacrifice and would even eat grass, to ensure nuclear parity

with India'. Bhutto believed that atomic power could be the bedrock of the country's political dominance and his successor, General Zia-ul-Haq, could well be forced into manufacturing the so-called Islamic bomb for reasons of national pride. The arcane and Macchiavellian diplomatic manoeuvres associated with the Islamic bomb have recently been the subject of much press comment. The uranium is dug out of the ground in the francophone African state of Niger; Ghadafi's Libya is the assiduous middleman; France is eagerly assisting with the reprocessing of spent fuel and doing so in spite of US pressure for a surcease to this activity; the nuclear effort itself is believed to be centred at Kahuta, 25 miles south of Islamabad.

Beleaguered Afrikanerdom is unlikely to sit idly by while the tide of black nationalism rolls forward and, for several years now, there has been intense speculation in world capitals as to whether South Africa has developed a nuclear weapon. In 1977 the Soviet Government openly accused her of the establishment of a nuclear test range in the Kalahari Desert, and in 1979 there were US reports of a mysterious 'blue flash' in the ocean south of Africa. Pretoria's policy has always been 'deterrence with uncertainty' and this stance seems likely to continue for the forseeable future. That Israel is already a *de facto* nuclear power capable of assembling and delivering a bomb within a few days or even hours, is now generally accepted. Persistent reports have been circulating over the last 12 months that Iraq, with French assistance, is likely to join the nuclear club. Argentina and Brazil are rivals for dominance in the southern cone of Latin America. Neither has signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty; both could readily, if they so desired, 'go nuclear', and in 1975 the latter concluded the biggest nuclear deal ever (described in the press as *le marché du siècle*) with Federal Germany. It amounted to $4 billion and undertook to supply Brazil with a complete nuclear fuel cycle—reactors, reprocessing plants, enrichment facilities—the whole sad and familiar catalogue. At the other end of the world two Asian countries, Taiwan and South Korea, both with substantial civilian nuclear programmes (Taiwan has 2 reactors completed and 2 under construction: the corresponding figures for South Korea are 1 and 6), could consider that their strategic guarantees from the USA are inadequate and that their only option is to enter the nuclear weapons club.

Nuclear weapons proliferation is a deep-seated malady. Its genesis is highly complex; its palliation, much less its cure, will be enormously difficult and could prove to be impossible. Only three possibilities present themselves by means of which atomic proliferation could be managed and the nuclear genie rebottled. The first is through the use of what people in the USA call 'punishing stimuli'. According to this view the only means of bringing the world to its senses and preventing the steady drift to Armageddon is through 'atomic shock treatment', as a result of which methods, short of an actual nuclear war, are employed. Such methods are, of course, protean and include the accidental launching of a missile due to malfunction and human fallibility, an accidental explosion

during the transport and storage of atomic materials and—increasingly in a world where hijackings, kidnappings and wanton slaying come within the purview of the political terrorist and saboteur—the explosion or threat of an atomic explosion for purposes of blackmail. Already there have been several examples of these types of activity—the Russian nuclear disaster in the Kyshtun region of the Urals in 1957; a Soviet spy satellite powered by nuclear energy, getting out of control, falling out of orbit and plunging downwards in Northern Canada over the Great Slave Lake in 1978; Three Mile Island in 1979; a Soviet nuclear submarine in difficulties off Okinawa in 1980; a fuel explosion in a US nuclear missile silo in Arkansas only a few months ago.

But those who proselytize for the use of 'punishing stimuli' must recognise the dangers which they are facing. The stakes for mankind would be inordinately high, and their consequences are difficult or impossible to predict. Far from attenuating nuclear proliferation the reverse effect could be produced and the whole process could be the catalyst for the oft-prophesied nuclear *Götterdammerung.*

It is frequently stated that the virulence of the nuclear bacillus could be decreased if the Non-Proliferation Treaty were improved and strengthened. This is, of course, the second method of dealing with the problem. The NPT, drawn up in 1968, came into effect in 1970 and ten years later had been ratified by 115 nations, the most recent recruits being Japan, Turkey, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. The essence of the Treaty is a bargain between the 'haves' and the 'have nots'. If the latter agree to remain outside the nuclear weapons club the former will provide them with nuclear energy for peaceful purposes while at the same time curbing their voracious appetites for nuclear weaponry.

From its inception the flaws in the NPT were glaringly obvious. Two of the original nuclear weapons powers—France and China—did not sign and since then have shown no inclination to do so. India was not a signatory; neither were the 'near nuclear powers'—Pakistan, Israel, South Africa, Brazil, Argentina—referred to previously. Furthermore, safeguards *vis-à-vis* the NPT have proved to be totally inadequate. They are under the control of the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency; they are confined to the non-weapons States, and the literature of the 1970's is studded with descriptions of their manifold defects. Finally, the duplicity of the Superpowers must be condemned *à toute outrance.* In spite of the NPT the arms race has continued at an even more frenetic pace while the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks are currently in abeyance and there seems little likelihood, following the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan and the election of Ronald Reagan to the Presidency of the United States, that they will be resurrected in their present form in the foreseeable future.

The third option—that of international and preferably supranational control of atomic energy—is at first sight much the most promising. The concept dates back to 1946, to the renowned Acheson-Lillienthal Report and the Baruch Plan, which recognised that:

> The development of atomic energy for peaceful purposes . . . and for bombs are . . . interchangeable and independent. . . . National rivalries are at the heart of the difficulty. . . . If the production of fissionable materials by National Governments (or by private organisations under their control) is permitted, systems of inspection cannot by themselves be made effective safeguards.

The immediate establishment of an International Atomic Development Authority which would place all strategic nuclear materials and facilities under 'effective international control' was recommended. This body would stop the manufacture of atomic bombs and dispose of all existing stocks; it would take punitive sanctions against nations violating its code of practice and its dicta would not be subject to a Security Council Veto.

Would a modified version of the Acheson-Lillienthal Report and the Baruch Plan have a greater chance of success in 1981 than in 1946? The likelihood is slim, to put it mildly. The Soviet Union vetoed the initial plan, proceeded to develop its own bombs and now has a nuclear arsenal which many believe is superior to that of the USA. Given such a situation would Moscow now be prepared to be less intransigent bearing in mind also that the concept of creating a supranational authority involving the capitalist world runs directly counter to the doctrine of Marxism-Leninism? And could co-operation be expected from aggressive nuclear vendors like France and Federal Germany which, during the Seventies, delighted in peddling atomic hardware to potentially sensitive areas of the world? What about India, the newest member of the nuclear club; and Pakistan, determined at all costs to obtain parity with her powerful neighbour? The new Chinese administration would undoubtedly treat such a proposal with a degree of disapprobation amounting to derision. China, as the putative leader of the Third World, continues to advise developing countries to embrace the military as well as peaceful side of atomic energy in order to defend themselves against 'enslavement' by the Superpowers, especially the Soviet Union. Finally, what has come of the US initiative on proliferation launched by President Carter in 1977 as the International Fuel Cycle Evaluation Programme? IFCEP was due to report back to him in 1979 and when it did it reached no substantive conclusions. Instead it was bitterly critical of current US policy—to re-examine the basic assumptions behind the plutonium economy, to discourage the reprocessing of spent fuel and to make a serious endeavour to give the anaemic NPT a much-needed shot in the arm. Where there should have been an elephant there was instead a mouse.

Is there, then, any possibility of turning the tide of nuclear proliferation? I am reminded of the old Russian proverb quoted by Solzhenitsyn in *The Oak and the Calf*—'some troubles you can't sleep off'. Probably the best we can hope for—and it must be stressed that there is little sign of this at present—is an improvement in the calibre and quality of international leadership. It is in this arena that I believe medicine has an important role to play.

Until very recently the view of doctors *à propos* the global nuclear dilemma has been narrow and restrictive. They know only too well the

penchant of radiation to cause somatic diseases of which various types of cancer are the most important and spectacular; they are well aware of the ability of ionising radiations to mutilate and kill cells, to modify their chromosomal structure, to speed up the rate of genetic mutation and to be a prime factor in the causation of diseases such as Down's syndrome, haemophilia, achondroplasia and phenylketonuria. They are also at the epicentre of an intense argument about 'maximum permissible dosages of radiation' which sometimes reaches a degree of acerbity unparalleled even in the scientific literature.

Yet the broader issues in the nuclear arena have traditionally been neglected by the profession. The medical curriculum, fixated as it remains with narrow specialism and with feats of technological legerdemain, largely eschews them; a medical student can still graduate with scarcely a glimmer of understanding about the nuclear-sated world which he will encounter for the rest of his life. The consequences of a nuclear exchange whether it be small or large, whether it be with tactical or strategic weapons, are not described although authoritative and detailed treatises in this field—articles by Bernard Feld in the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* in June 1976, and by Kevin Lewis in *Scientific American* in July 1979, to quote only two—are readily available for perusal.

Fortunately this situation now seems likely to change. The Medical Society for the Prevention of War, an organisation with little political clout in the past, is gaining adherents. Also in the USA a new organisation designated Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR) under the presidency of Dr. Helen Caldicott, has come into being. This Society is reported to be burgeoning, having doubled its membership in the last six months. Its major aims are the education of the medical profession and the general public about the medical hazards of nuclear technology, a moratorium on the building of nuclear plants in the USA, a surcease on the export of American nuclear technology to other countries, complete nuclear disarmament at the global level and the rapid development of policies of energy conservation. A British group of PSR to be known as the Medical Campaign Against Nuclear Weapons is currently in the process of formation.

The medical profession should not underrate its ability to mould public attitudes. Take for example the population issue in Britain, admittedly a theme of much less salience than that of nuclear proliferation. When our *Doctors and Over-population Group* was formed in 1972, our five main tenets were to persuade the government that a population problem existed, to press for an expansion of contraceptive services, to uphold a liberal abortion law, to advocate female emancipation and women's rights and to participate actively in a programme of population education.

Eight years later it is gratifying to note how much of our credo has passed into the conventional wisdom. Population affairs became the responsibility for a Minister of Cabinet rank; family planning services have been greatly expanded and are now affecting a much broader stratum of society; a liberal abortion law has remained on the statute

book in spite of several well orchestrated attempts to move it in a more restrictive direction. During 1975 the Equal Pay and Sex Discrimination Acts became law and population education has slowly but surely been edging its way into curricula of schools, colleges and universities.

It cannot, of course, be claimed that doctors were solely responsible for this beneficent tide of change. But that they played a significant role in its genesis can scarcely be doubted and this has been mainly due to the cognizance which elected representatives, both local and national, and the public at large give to the views of our profession.

But now we have another and much more important tryst with destiny. For is it not high time that we took a stance on nuclear proliferation, the issue that, above all has the capacity to throw the planet into a supreme convulsion? There is an old adage which says that if trouble comes, make use of it. Heaven knows, the politicians have caused us enough trouble and threatened our very survival by disseminating the atom around the world at an ever increasing pace. Should we, as doctors, not at least make some concerted attempt to register our disgust at this insanity? It was J. M. Keynes who wrote that the only way to alter opinion was to set in motion new forces of instruction and imagination, to dare to venture into fields of politics hitherto untrodden and uncharted. Global nuclear disarmament would fit the last mentioned category. Perhaps the time has now come for our profession to take the lead in promoting this most crucial of causes.

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[Dr. John A. Loraine is Senior Lecturer, Department of Community Medicine and Director, Centre for Human Ecology, University of Edinburgh.]

The June issue of *Contemporary Review* includes *After Tehran* by Paul Wilkinson, *The Future* by Michael Allaby, *The Labour Party in 1981* by Kevin Featherstone and *Portrait of Nathan Field* by Sheila Huftel.

# PATRIATION OF CANADA'S CONSTITUTION

## by Tom Riley

FINALLY, 113 years after the passage of the British North America Act which set up the Dominion of Canada but left her constitution residing in Westminster that same constitution is now to be patriated and brought home to rest in Canada.

However, though the simple statement that Canada is at long last patriating her constitution might appear to make the matter a straightforward one it is, in fact, quite the reverse, for there are many problems being encountered by the Federal Parliament as their resolution is being guided through the House of Commons and the Senate and when passed Canada will request Her Majesty the Queen to have her Government submit an Act to Parliament which will then patriate the constitution.

The resolution being sent by the Canadian Government to England is in two parts. The first is a request for patriation under which the British North America Act will become the Canada Act 1980 and the second section is a new constitution which includes an amending formula to the proposed new constitution and a Charter of Rights and Freedoms, including language rights.

It is the latter action which has caused the controversy. The provinces, who could not agree on what the new constitution should contain either at the last Federal-Provincial constitutional talks held in September 1980 or in any previous talks since Confederation, are seeking agreement to have a constitution which is agreed upon by themselves and the Federal Government. Two of the provinces, Ontario and New Brunswick, agree outright with the Federal position on patriation while six of them have expressed vociferous disapproval and have taken the matter to the provincial appeals courts in Manitoba, Quebec and Newfoundland. Simply stated, the provinces say that no amendment to the constitution is possible without their approval and consultations by the Federal Government.

The Manitoba Court of Appeal, in a split decision of 3-2, said that there was no convention in existence which required Federal-Provincial agreement. In short, the three judges stated that such a constitutional requirement did not exist.

In Canada the whole question is one of heated debate and emotion. The minority New Democratic Party have supported the Liberals in their patriation in place of certain amendments to the proposed constitution with regard to energy and resource rights and the rights of native peoples (their inherent rights as a people will be recognised in the proposed Constitution).

The Official Opposition Party, the Progressive Conservatives, have said they would support straightforward patriation but are opposed to patriation with an amended constitution without the agreement of the provinces.

The provinces are rightly worried about what kind of amending formula is in the Constitution. As it stands there are three options: (1) The provinces reach a full agreement in a two year period following patriation, (2) a referendum is held after a certain formula is reached with the majority of provinces (along with the right for the Federal Government to put out their own resolution) and (3) if the provinces do not agree two years after the patriation then an automatic amending formula, involving regional majorities on amendments, automatically comes into effect.

The overall problem is that the provinces fear the Federal Government imposing on them changes to the Constitution and existing rights along with an amending formula into which they cannot have an input, and thus once again increase the powers of Ottawa.

The proposed entrenched Charter of Rights and Freedoms is a sound concept but even here on the question of mobility rights (the right of a Canadian to move anywhere and work anywhere in Canada) and language rights, some of the provinces are in loud opposition.

It is apparent that all Canadians agree with the principle that the Canadian constitution should rest in Canada. The difficulty is what will be in the constitution, and how to go about amending it.

The whole struggle between Ottawa and the provinces needs to be understood in its historical context. There have been disagreements between the Federal government and the provinces since Confederation. In the past, outside Canada, the media focus has been mainly on Quebec because of the separatist movement in the province and the subsequent election of a Government committed to the principle; and finally the referendum in May, 1980, in which 60% of Quebecers rejected even a 'sovereignty-association', i.e. an economic union with Canada with wide powers as a sovereign nation for Quebec.

In fact the struggle, as personified by the conflict between Ottawa and Quebec over the last few decades, has been the traditional struggle in Canada between provinces. At the moment Ottawa is embroiled with Alberta and Newfoundland over natural resources ownership. Newfoundland herself came into Confederation in 1949 with barely 50% of the people agreeing in a referendum. British Columbian citizens often feel isolated from Ottawa because of the long distance and the Rocky Mountains which separate them from the rest of Canada.

The provinces are quite rightly opposing the Federal view, as that is the way Canada was set up originally. The political leaders of the provinces were themselves elected to represent the regional interests (and the way Canadian voters vote federally is often different from the way they vote provincially. For example, although there is a Liberal Government in power in Ottawa, not one province has a Liberal party in power).

The Federal Government position, as personified by the man at the centre of all this, Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, is that it has been impossible to reach an agreement amongst the provinces and that this situation will continue. The Prime Minister then made it quite clear that in this day and age it was not right for a sovereign nation such as Canada

to have her constitution lodged in another country and that the time had come to take unilateral action.

It is becoming evident that this is no longer a legal problem and that the Federal Government could be quite right in their approach, assuming that when the Manitobal appeal goes to the Supreme Court of Canada the decision will weigh on the side of the Federal Government. So what emerges from this is a serious political problem. The kernel of the matter is that the Federal government is saying that it is necessary for a strong, central government to promote the best interests of Canada, while the provinces argue that the very make up of Canada, its ethnic, its history, its two official languages, its regional differences, demand that there be agreement between the provinces and Ottawa. It becomes a question of who shall hold what political power. If Ottawa wins, say the provinces, then much of their sovereignty will be taken away. If Ottawa wins, says the Federal Government, then Canada will be stronger for it and this, says the Prime Minister, is not only what counts in the long run but what the people of Canada want.

Though there is disagreement, the Federal Government is now pressing the resolution through Parliament and will then send it to London. It is here that we move into the centre of another political storm (or a storm in a teacup depending on how close one is to the issue). When Prime Minister Trudeau visited Prime Minister Thatcher in June, 1980, he says he got from her the assurances that Westminster, i.e. her Government, will deal with it as expeditiously as possible and all but guaranteeing it would go through. Now, there is wide disagreement that it will be dealt with so speedily.

Again, legally, it is not clear that the British Parliament have the right to do anything except present Parliament whatever Ottawa sends.

In September 1980, with a leading article in *The Times*, the first rumblings of discontent were heard. It was solemnly declared that no Act to patriate the Canadian constitution should be passed through Westminster without the approval of the provinces.

There has been much political bickering back and forth since that date. Backbench MPs at Westminster have said they will oppose any such move; the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs, under the chairmanship of Sir Anthony Kershaw, said, in essence, that Parliament should not pass any resolution without the consent of the provinces. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Thatcher and the Leader of the House, Mr. Francis Pym, have said they will deal with the matter as and when the request comes from Ottawa. One problem is seen to be the parliamentary timetable. Originally, Prime Minister Trudeau hoped to have the newly drafted Constitution here last December (1980) and then back in Canada by Dominion Day, July 1 1981. This does not now seem possible because of the tight parliamentary timetable at Westminster. As a matter of fact, when the Federal Government in Ottawa was accused of not stating the whole truth about having guarantees from London (with leaked documents in Canada suggesting there were problems and that it was not all

that straightforward) this led to accusations that perhaps Ottawa was even trying to fool the British by getting them to pass a constitution that Canadians didn't want and that the British were understandably annoyed at this.

However, this does not make sense as the British Government had received the proposed resolution well before this accusation was made arose. The Prime Minister was given a copy by Secretary of State for External Affairs, Canada, Mark MacGuigan and Environment Minister John Roberts within days of Trudeau announcing he would be acting unilaterally on the constitution.

What was obvious from the documents is the Government were saying quite simply that there was opposition amongst the backbenchers and Ottawa could expect problems when the debate reached Westminster. This is a reasonable view considering that the present U.K. Parliament is an unruly one, with backbenchers being vociferous on many issues. On two occasions,—the aborted attempt to push through a Protection of Information Bill and the embargo on Iran which the Conservative Government wanted to make retroactive to the date of the hostage takeover in November, 1979—the Government was forced to withdraw unpopular measures.

However, the real issues are whether or not the British Parliament has the legal right to amend any request from Ottawa, coupled with the very real political fact that there are MPs who feel strongly on this issue, and are in disagreement with the Federal Government's actions in Ottawa.

At one point it was suggested that the whole question was causing a severe strain on British-Canadian relationships. Yet this stems more from passionate debates in the heat of the moment, exacerbated by almost hysterical media coverage in some papers and reasoned debates in others as well as the actions of Prime Minister Trudeau himself, which do not always help to soothe the tensions. For example, there was the famous press conference in which he said the British had no choice but to send through Parliament any resolution the Canadian Parliament sent over to it. Certainly this did not endear him to the British people.

However, at the eleventh hour the situation shifted into an easier stance with Mr. Trudeau offering to spare Britain the embarrassment of considering the patriation of Canada's constitution until the Supreme Court of Canada had an opportunity to pronounce on the legality of the submission, although inevitably the final outcome remains in doubt.

What is evident, is that this is an issue which arouses strong emotion; also that the time has come for Canada's constitution to be brought home. It is unfortunate that in the midst of all the comings and goings since the September talks yet another conference was not held and agreement sought once more.

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[Tom Riley, a British/Canadian author and journalist, is currently the Executive Director of the International Freedom of Information Commission.]

# THE WEMBLEY SELL-OUT

## by Paul Rose

IT was perhaps symbolic that as a former Labour M.P., having been in the Party since before the legal age of consent, I could not obtain a Visitor's ticket for the big January match at Wembley. Some more fortunate members of another Party who happened to have influence were among the privileged. However, Television is as good a substitute as it is for a Cup Final. All it lacks is atmosphere. The bars and gossip, the bonhomie or intolerance cannot be replaced by the Television interviews with selected personalities between the classified block vote results.

By the time this article is read many more events will have overtaken it, but for many, Wembley was a watershed. For others it was a warning and for yet others a signal to try to stem the tide or sail upon it according to their viewpoints. The issues were not arid constitutional battles. These concealed much deeper motives and basically like all such battles were about power.

Tony Benn is right when he states that Prime Ministers have too much power and patronage. Michael Foot is right when he appeals for tolerance and supports the rights of dissenters. But Shirley Williams is also right when she fears that the rejection of Michael Foot's compromise is a signal that Tony Benn and forces inimical to Parliamentary democracy may have changed the very nature of the Labour Party.

If she and others were accused of agonising in public they did no more than reflect the more private agony of many of us whose lives have been inseparable from the party since childhood. Unless doubts are articulated —even if they are exploited by a predominantly Tory Press—there can be no real debate about the changes in Society, the change in the role of Trade Unionism or the nature of democratic Socialism in the 1980s.

Change is always painful but loyalty in politics must be to principles first with a considered judgement of the best means of putting those principles into practice as a necessary follow up. A political Party is not in itself a principle. It is a vehicle. Its constitution may involve matters of principle. What disturbed many like me who were resolved to stay in the vehicle was that the atmosphere was polluted not only by smoke filled rooms but by an element of poison gas designed to destroy some of the basic principles which made us board the vehicle in the first place.

There have always been groupings hostile to the mainstream of tolerant debate. For years we have had to put up with the nonsense of a block vote that debased the very decisions it dictated and therefore parodoxically made it less unacceptable. It does not matter what the percentages are. I have always believed in extending democracy beyond M.Ps. After all, most Labour Constituencies do not have the dubious blessing of an M.P. anyway and therefore are completely disenfranchised from even making representations to their member over the leadership issue.

However, to select a leader on the basis of votes that are an arbitrary figure arrived at by willingness to pay affiliation fees by Unions which contain a large section of Tory voters or an influential caucus of Communists is a nonsense. Some people belong to the Coop, the Fabian Society, the Labour Party and a Union and in theory may have four votes. The answer—so staggeringly simple as to meet with little favour—of one member one vote has been overwhelmingly rejected. The Chartists would turn in their graves.

To hypothesize as to what it is all about let us imagine Mr. Foot's 'leftist' successor obtaining just over half the Union votes, i.e. block votes, thus giving him say 23 per cent. Add to that two thirds of the Constituencies, another 20%. He could lead a Parliamentary Party in which only 32% of the members support him. By the same token, if the Unions swing to the other pole, as they did in the days of Deakin, and three quarters vote for the right-wing candidate, this would serve him 30% on a platter. It would only need a third of the M.Ps. and constituency Parties to support him. In both cases his moral authority would not extend either to the Labour Party activists or M.Ps., let alone the Labour Parties or their voters.

As it so happens Michael Foot is the most representative figure for the Labour Movement as a whole, but there are forces waiting in the wings for whom he is merely a first step. True, there are others who cry foul who were ready to expel Bevanites and now find themselves at the wrong end of Benn or Huckfield's McCarthyite oaths of allegiance. How one can gaze into a political crystal ball I know not. After all, both men changed their views on Europe—one rather late in the day—and that was their right in a democratic, tolerant party. I am certain that with his record of libertarianism that is the kind of party Michael Foot and a section of Tribunites want.

What I saw at Blackpool in the Autumn of 1980 undermined my faith in their ability to stem the authoritarian flood and made the prospect of a Social Democratic grouping more attractive even if on some issues such as the so-called nuclear deterrent I may prefer Michael Foot's approach to that of Bill Rodgers. However, there was little that one could take issue with in David Steel's ten point plan. There are things I would add and no doubt Shirley Williams with her record on public services and equality will do so. Social democracy unfortunately embraces some cold-war warriors and witch hunters but by and large the desire for radical change and the assessment of the realities combine to contrast them with the posturing Left, rooted in an analysis of Society that has not changed in thirty years or the conservative and pragmatic right that has no analysis at all. I well remember in the days of the New Left, Professor Thompson and others suggesting that Croslandism should have its chance but believing it would fail. I believe that the radical 'right' which in many ways is more advanced than the old fashioned 'left' may now be given its head. It will mean realignment, agreed minimum aims with the Liberals and some Labour M.Ps. and electoral bargaining. It will be a

long and difficult road—perhaps even a cul-de-sac. But unless there is a powerful rejection of the atmosphere I detected at Blackpool and Wembley it will happen—and in fact has already happened.

It could attract large numbers of people who feel disenfranchised under the current restricted choice. It may attract those Tories disenchanted with Monetarism, but it must succeed in denting the traditional loyalties to Party and name that serve Labour so well in its industrial heartlands of the regions. Another centre Party will be a duplication of the Commuter belt Liberal Associations.

It has got to be radical and not reject solutions which are traditionally socialist and interventionist. It must be welded to a deep belief in human rights, civil liberties and attract ethnic minorities by a principled stand on citizenship and immigration. Sympathy with Trade Unionism must replace rule by powerful sectional interests in the context of an initially agreed policy for incomes. That can only be secured if its direction is seen to be towards greater equality and full employment. Statutory measures can only follow in the wake of consensus. If Labour's strength was its broadness then conservationists, community groups and a grass roots development must go hand in hand with the big names. Field Marshals and Generals will bring experience and leadership but they need an army—and that army will contain N.C.O.s from Parliament, local councillors, former M.P.s and above all, enthusiastic infantry excited at the new departure and each carrying a field marshal's baton in his pack. A self-appointed elite, even the 'gang of three' and Roy Jenkins, would not mean a real breakaway without the grass roots that former M.P.s Michael Barnes and Colin Phipps are organising in London and the West Midlands. I have therefore decided to add to their efforts!

Of course the split may be a nine days wonder in which the pioneers are merely entering the political wilderness of a no-man's-land that has been the fate of so many break-away groups. The machine may be too strong but there is evidence of a resentment at machine politics and a steady erosion of the loyalist labour vote or indeed the loyalist vote as such.

Europe may be its Achilles Heel but it is a commitment albeit critical which it cannot shirk. Indeed the hysterical insularity of sections of the Labour Party over Europe is what pushed many natural radicals who prefer the rest of Michael Foot's predilections to those of Mr. Callaghan's towards the radical Europeans. At least we live in the same century or decade and speak the same language even when we agree to differ, and whatever our political lineage and past loyalities.

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[Paul Rose was Labour Member of Parliament for Blakeley Manchester 1964-79. His new book, *Backbencher's Dilemma,* was published in March 1981 by Frederick Muller Ltd. (£8.95).]

# DETENTE AND ATLANTIC RELATIONS

**by James H. Wyllie**

THE internal disagreements amongst members of the Atlantic Alliance over the appropriate initial responses to the Soviet invasion and occupation of Afghanistan clearly illustrated the problems of co-ordinating the high foreign policies of the United States and the West European allies. The division of opinion was exacerbated by the perception in most West European capitals of an apparent lack of direction in United States foreign policy and the strong emotions aroused by the first overt use of Soviet military force outside Eastern Europe since 1945. Such emotions propelled the British government to concur with the Carter Administration's interpretations of the Soviet invasion, though such support was subsequently weakened by the inability of the Thatcher Administration to undertake positive action. Essentially, the division amongst members of the Alliance was between the Washington view and the Bonn-Paris view of the significance of the invasion of Afghanistan, and what constituted an appropriate response.

The Carter interpretation incorporated notions of an 'arc of crises' along the north-western peripheral of the Indian Ocean,[1] fears of the 'gravest threat to peace since World War II', and images of a return to the Cold War while the Bonn-Paris interpretation, which certainly incorporated dismay and condemnation, was tempered by an appreciation that Kabul was a long way from Central Europe, that great powers like to secure their borders, and that the great efforts of the past twenty years to achieve the current state of European security should not be put at risk. Hence, while the Carter Administration was postponing consideration of SALT II, attempting to co-ordinate an international boycott of the Moscow Olympics, reviving military containment, and mourning the passing of detente, Giscard d'Estaing was meeting in summit with Brezhnev in Warsaw on May 18,[2] and Helmut Schmidt was striving to preserve channels of communication to the East. Certainly, West German athletes declined the invitation to participate in the Moscow Olympics, but this was the least the Federal Republic could do to support its major military ally, and perhaps that was the very reason why such an instrument was chosen.

In the minds of much of the American foreign policy establishment, not merely the Carter Administration, Afghanistan provided the opportunity to question the worth of detente and the occasion to argue that it was a discredited policy relationship. In continental West Europe the contrary was the case and, while ever wary of the colossus to the East, every effort was made to preserve detente and perpetuate the relaxation of tensions between the two blocs which the northern hemisphere, especially Europe, has enjoyed for most of the past twenty years. This current phase of East-West detente emerged in the post-Cuba years when, aware of the near catastrophe over the Cuban missile crisis of October 1962,

the two superpowers tacitly agreed to a relaxation of tensions.[1] This did not forego ideological competition, but acknowledged that in a thermonuclear world the best form of crisis management was to avoid direct confrontation, particularly over matters of perceived vital interest to either or both superpowers. A divided Europe, always the major prize in superpower competition and until the 1960's the focus of United States —Soviet rivalry, welcomed and exploited detente. However, the detente which was welcomed in the 1960's, and prospered in Europe in the 1970's, became by 1980 the major source of controversy within the Atlantic Alliance. Indeed, the fundamental disagreement over Afghanistan was a reflection of, and rooted in, divergent perspectives of detente, merely exacerbated by the lack of empathy between the Carter Administration and the continental West European leaders. Although the initial discord has diminished, an appreciation of these divergent perspectives of detente is essential if a repeat of the Afghanistan experience is to be avoided in the management of any future East-West crisis, especially if it occurs in the extra-North Atlantic area.

Detente is a product of the Cold War and, as with the Cold War, the United States and the West European allies have pursued the detente process in different but often complementary ways, and supported asymmetrical perspectives of detente's primary qualities and purposes. Since the early 1960's the United States has conceptualised detente as a military and global process, with the focus of policy makers in all the administrations since JFK on the Soviet Union's military capabilities, the Soviet military threat, and how detente best served the United States' military-security objectives. Obviously military detente has not been pursued to the absolute exclusion of political and economic detente, e.g. in the early years of the Carter Administration human rights assumed a high foreign policy profile, but invariably the 'other detentes' have taken second place to military detente when military-security objectives were at risk or when the 'other detentes' could be used as instruments to further military detente: e.g., the Nixon Administration's political detente with Red China. On the other hand, the West Europeans' detente has been conceptualised primarily as a political process, with attention focussed on assessments of the political intentions of the Soviet Union in Europe and the political threat posed. The West Europeans have not viewed detente exclusively in political terms, with military and economic detente receiving considerable support; but economic detente, for example, has clearly been used as an instrument for political detente, while disappointing results in the field of military detente have been utilised, not as a means to discredit detente, but as all the more reason to pursue a relaxation of political tensions.

In the aftermath of the Korean War the United States conceptualised Containment as a military strategy and the Cold War as a global conflict. Detente was born out of Cold War military crisis and hence conceptualised by the Western superpower in global, military terms. Undoubtedly, the superpower bilateral codification of detente has primarily been

of a military nature and, where it has not been purely military, the salient military elements have received the most public attention and political acclaim. The agreement on the establishment of the Hot Line between Washington and Moscow, the 1963 Partial Test Ban Treaty between the United States (with Great Britain) and the Soviet Union, SALT I and the ABM Treaty of 1972, the military elements of the treaty on Basic Principles of Relations between the United States and the USSR of 1972, the Vladivostok Accords of 1974, and SALT II have been the heart of detente for all the United States' Administrations over the past twenty years. In the early 1970's a vain attempt at political, military and economic linkage took place,[8] supported in its early manifestations by Henry Kissinger and later by conservative elements in Congress but, faced with a divisible interpretation of detente by the Soviet Union and by domestic obstacles to a foreign policy consensus at home, linkage was soon abandoned as a major policy instrument. Detente soon came to be judged by the success or otherwise of superpower arms control rather than arms control being accepted as a component, albeit a very important one, of the over-all detente process.[9] The military perspective of detente in the United States was reinforced as, throughout the 1970's, detente was increasingly measured in military terms—dismay grew at the modernisation and build-up of Soviet strategic nuclear, naval, and conventional military capabilities, and Soviet-sponsored Cuban military activities in Africa and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan were seen to be contrary to the spirit, if not the codified letter, of bilateral, superpower detente. Ironically, the growing dissatisfaction with detente, as measured in military terms, contributed to the strength of conservative feeling in the United States against the Carter Administration's SALT II Agreement which, when judged by many to be unsatisfactory, contrary to official advice, was held up as further proof of the unequal nature of United States—Soviet detente.

As with the Cold War, the West European response to detente was essentially political. In the early years of the Cold War, particularly following the Communist *coup d'état* in Czechoslovakia in 1948, the West European states encouraged not only United States economic and political support, but also a military commitment to West European security. Convinced of the military threat by the West Europeans, the United States took up the military burden but, in the early post-Korea years, the Europeans then returned to a primarily political appreciation of the threat. De Gaulle's opening to the East in the early 1960's was based upon an appreciation of the relative military security in Europe, and hence the opportunity for France to take the political initiative. The *Ostpolitik* of the Federal Republic of Germany which gathered pace in the 1960's and, despite (or because of) the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, blossomed in the 1970's, was rooted in an awareness of West German military security through membership of NATO but was, in itself, a political process. The hallmarks of *Ostpolitik*, the Moscow, Warsaw and Inter-German treaties were, primarily, political settlements, aimed at removing political tensions. Similarly, the concomitant Quadri-

partite Agreement on Berlin, negotiated between the four occupying powers, was a political settlement, considerably reducing tensions in Europe's most dangerous, potential crisis point. It could be argued that the Mutual Force Reduction talks in Vienna focus on the East-West military balance in Europe and so fall under the category of military detente. Concern over manpower and tanks do form the basis of discussion but the MFR talks began in the first place as a quid pro quo from Moscow, in order to achieve NATO agreement to the Soviet suggestion for a European security conference. The West Europeans welcomed force reduction talks because it would ease political pressure from the United States' Senate on the Nixon Administration to withdraw troops from Europe. The Mutual Force Reduction talks have continued for the past seven years (the talks were not postponed or cancelled when the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan) because they serve a political purpose: the Vienna talks provide a mechanism for multilateral East-West rather than superpower bilateral dialogue. Furthermore, it has been suggested that the Soviet Union has little desire to reach agreement because the withdrawal of some United States' forces could have the political effect of encouraging a new bout of either West European integration or West European nationalism.[7] The Final Act of the conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe of 1975 contains military clauses relating to the use of force and confidence building measures but the emphasis was on political and economic detente. In return for the 'legitimisation' of the post 1945 frontiers in Eastern Europe, the West received assurances on sovereign rights, human rights, and economic and scientific cooperation. The human rights expectations have not been fulfilled but the West European continental states, especially the Federal Republic of Germany, have maximised the other aspects of political and economic detente facilitated by the Helsinki Final Act.

The West Europeans have certainly welcomed the bilateral SALT process and attributed to it great significance in superpower detente but, while condemning Soviet-supported adventures in the Third World, the Soviet arms build-up, and the invasion of Afghanistan, the political objectives of detente (including economic detente) have been accorded priority. For the West Europeans detente has served a distinctly European and political function, affordable, in part, because of the military and global perspective of the United States. Hence, there is an awareness in West Europe, which acts as an in-built brake on United States—West European discord, that the twin perspectives of detente should not be permitted to diverge too much. But, notwithstanding the preferences of some West European leaders, the former colonial powers of a presently welfare-oriented, introspective West Europe cannot afford a global vision for a mix of economic, socio-political and, mostly acutely, geo-political reasons.

In detente, as in politics in general, where you stand depends upon where you sit. In Washington the global, military perspective is seen to be as essential to national interest as the more limited, geo-political perspective of the West European states is perceived as essential to

West European national interests. However, a bridge between these two differing perspectives of detente may have been provided by recent Soviet military developments. In addition to the shock administered to the Alliance's nervous system by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the growing appreciation in Europe of the distinct military threat posed by the developments in the Soviet theatre nuclear arsenal resulting from the procurement and deployment of the mobile, multiple-warheaded SS-20 missile and the Backfire bomber, together with the United States appreciation of the political implications of the resultant Eurostrategic imbalance, i.e. the prospect of United States—West European politico-strategic decoupling, have produced a process of convergence of the twin perspectives of detente. Ironically, the net effect of the SS-20 has been to narrow the Atlantic. The decisions of the British, West German and Italian governments to deploy Pershing II and cruise missiles as a counter to the SS-20 and Backfire, despite the preference of the Dutch and Belgian governments to postpone decisions until the outcome of attempts at Eurostrategic arms limitation talks, illustrates a heightened awareness by the West Europeans of the military component of East-West relations.[8]

Concern over the Eurostrategic imbalance paralleled with the traumas of United States—European discord over appropriate reactions to the Afghanistan crisis have brought into motion a convergence of the military and political perspectives of detente prevalent on either side of the Atlantic. Such a process could well be strengthened if a SALT III begins negotiations which includes consideration of not only superpower inter-continental nuclear arsenals but also the Euro-strategic systems recently discussed at Geneva.[9] The result of West European participation in a SALT III could be to strengthen the process of 'mutual education' within the Alliance and across the Atlantic.

Such a desirable development could facilitate the management of future crises, whether inside or outside the North Atlantic area. In this regard, the calculated and ordered response of the Alliance to the current unrest in Poland, with the avoidance, on both sides of the Atlantic, of irresponsible rhetoric, is encouraging. An increased United States' appreciation of West European political concerns could lighten pressure from Washington on the Europeans to undertake military tasks outside the North Atlantic area, while a greater appreciation by the Europeans of United States' military concerns could result in less reluctance by the West Europeans to share more of the military burden in the European theatre, thereby releasing some United States' resources for deployment elsewhere.[10] It is to be hoped that the Reagan Administration, despite its electoral campaign support for linkage, will not demand too much of the European allies in political and military support for the United States in pursuit of its rediscovered global role while, in Europe, the intra-Alliance political benefits of greater burden-sharing ought not to be neglected.

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NOTES:

1. For a definition of the 'arc of crises', and an illustration of United States' concern about that region preceding the invasion of Afghanistan, see George

# THE LAST DAYS OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH VIETNAM

## by Nghiem Xuan Thien

IN the middle of March 1975 the communists from North Vietnam took the province of Phuoc Long, near the Cambodian border, almost without fighting. In the high circles of South Vietnamese leaders a cry of alarm was raised. At a meeting of the Council for Culture and Education the Vice-President, Tran Van Huong, showed so deep a pessimism that many Council members thought him an alarmist.

When the meeting was over, several council members asked me—also a council member—what I thought of the situation. I said that I did not share the Vice-President's defeatist views. The situation was difficult but not desperate, as it appeared to be in his statements.

Time has shown that I was wrong. With the fall of Phuoc-Long, the bell tolled for the Republic of South Vietnam, left in the lurch by the withdrawal of the American troops.

Already, many Vietnamese high officials had sent their wives and children abroad; and beside the tall walls of the American Embassy, Vietnamese women were queueing, waiting anxiously for their turn to be called and given a pass permitting them to board an American plane to the U.S.A. They were fascinated by the idea that America was a land of plenty where roads were paved with gold. In the following years, they were proved fortunate to have left their country at the right time, under the protection of the U.S.A. government.

According to some Americans who left only when there was no hope of saving South Vietnam, the U.S.A. government gave priority to three categories of people wishing to leave the country:

1. Men or women who were relatives of Americans, either in Vietnam or in the U.S.A.,
2. Men or women who were working in an American office,
3. Vietnamese politicians known to the Americans in Saigon.

Most of those people were taken, together with members of their families, by American cars to Tan son Nhut Airport. From there, American planes flew them to the U.S.A.

Personally, I did not fit into any of these categories. I was not a politician playing a role in the South Vietnamese constitution. In spite of this, an American friend from the U.S.A. Embassy promised to take me and my family out of the country although, he said, there was no real necessity to leave. Ten Vietnamese divisions remaining inside or around Saigon could easily defend the Capital. Yet the National Radio brought bad news every day. The Communist army coming from North Vietnam was advancing unopposed towards Saigon. It seemed that an order had been given to all Vietnamese commanders 'to withdraw strategically

from everywhere'. These withdrawal tactics proved to be disastrous. On the roads leading from Hue and other capital towns to Saigon, hundreds of military armed cars slowly but steadily headed towards the capital. Civilians fleeing from the communist advance, following the National Army, hoped to be protected from the enemy. Many died of exhaustion. Children were abandoned by their parents either because they were sick or did not walk fast enough to keep up with the soldiers in flight. On the seaports, ships of the Vietnamese Navy were at anchor to take on the refugees who had to climb rope-ladders to reach the decks. Many, especially women and children, fell into the water and were left to their fate, amid cries of agony and despair.

When almost all the South Vietnamese towns around Saigon had fallen into enemy hands, I telephoned to my friend in the U.S.A. Embassy and was told to be ready to leave. A car would take me and my family to the airport two days later. But on that day, Saturday 26 April 1975, no car arrived. On the 28th, my son-in-law, daughter and grand-daughter went to my son-in-law's father's house. The old man had a son-in-law who was a general in the South Vietnamese army and, through him, could have a plane at his disposal. Thus, he could escape with the general's family, but I did not understand why he could not take my daughter and grand-daughter with him. It seemed that there was another plane due to take them that day. But in the afternoon a South Vietnamese renegade pilot from the Air Force bombed Tan son Nhut Airport, so no planes could take off. A curfew was declared. A general panic spread over Saigon. Very uneasy about my daughter's and grand-daughter's fate, I went with my wife to the home of my son-in-law's father to see whether my daughter and her small family could have left. But the house was empty. The neighbours told me that the old man had gone but that my daughter and her family were taken by my son-in-law's brother to the latter's home, whose address I did not know. So we had to return home, tortured by the anxiety.

In the evening of that day I ran to my American friend's home. He was not in. A young maid was there, telling me that for the last few days he had not been home and had sent an American friend from the Embassy to take away his belongings. She asked me what I wanted to see him for? I hesitated before replying because I knew that very many Viet-Cong young female agents had the mission of serving in American officials' home as chambermaids to watch their activities and especially the Vietnamese who visited them.

Next day (29th April), a car brought my daughter, son-in-law and grand-daughter to my home, as there was no more hope for them to flee. The situation of my daughter and her family gave me great anxiety and I tried to ring my American friend from the U.S.A. Embassy. Then I remembered that a few days before, the General Director of the Post and Telegraph Service had published in all Saigon Newspapers a notice saying that from that day on, during a curfew, private telephones would be cut off.

In the evening of that day I returned to my American friend's home. The maid told me that he still had not returned, but that a friend had called for his post and taken my letter. I left another note, this time with my name and address in full. On reading it the maid exclaimed: 'But you are well known in Saigon. I have very often heard your name! Come back tomorrow. You may meet my boss!'

That night, the Viet-Cong Radio ordered all Americans to get out of the country within 24 hours. One hour later, American helicopters crossed the sky from every direction, taking all American officials away to Vung Tau seaport. There, American ships had been awaiting them for many days past. I stood up on the terrace roof of my house, my daughter with her baby in her arms was by my side. We watched with sorrowful eyes as the American helicopters roared away.

When morning came, I went again to my American friend's home, though I knew it was useless. The maid was still there. She told me that, as usual, her boss had not come home. Perhaps, she suggested, I could find him at Duc Hotel. The Duc Hotel, in the centre of the capital, was reserved for American officials. I went there, and a desolating spectacle was offered to my gaze. The streets surrounding it were full of abandoned American cars. Groups of men were syphoning petrol out of the car-tanks into large metallic cans. At that time petrol was already expensive and fetched a high price on the black market.

I hurried into the hotel although there was little hope of finding my American friend. Furniture and refrigerators were being removed by an unruly mob. Those things, too, could be sold for a high price.

I hastened out of the hotel and returned to my own home, just in time to see my son-in-law's brother about to take my son-in-law and his family to his own home. He invited me to join them, saying that a plane might still be available to take us all out of the country. I thought this a nonsense, because by that time Tan son Nhut airport must be in the communists' hands and no plane could take off without their authorisation.

I had sold my house a few days earlier, thus we had money to take abroad. Through a tacit arrangement with the buyer we still occupied part of it. Alone in my room, I reviewed our position. The Vietnamese Air Force, the Navy and various foreign Embassies had been successfully approached by some of my friends and relatives. An aunt of mine with her whole family, (about 20 people) had gone to Bach-Dang River-port and boarded a Warship of the Vietnamese Navy. The warship sailed out of Saigon and straight on to Thailand. From there they were all taken by an American plane to the U.S.A.

I remembered a statement from the U.S.A. government saying that if Saigon was ever conquered by the Communists, it would certainly be immersed in a blood-bath. For myself, personally, I cared very little. All my life I had fought against Communism. Now, I was defeated and virtually a prisoner, through circumstances beyond my control. I was ready to endure whatever fate had in store for me, and I thought that

in any case my situation could not be as bad as that of a Roman Emperor taken prisoner by the Persians. He had been compelled during his captivity to kneel every day by the side of the Persian Emperor's horse, so that the latter could put one of his feet on the Roman's back, and then spring on his horse. This humiliating ordeal lasted five years, until the Persian Emperor ordered his victim to be skinned alive!

In fact, a number of ministers of the South Vietnamese government were left behind in Saigon. According to the Vietnamese Constitution, in the absence of the President, the Vice-President, Tran Van Huong, assumed the president's powers. He assembled a government composed mostly of intellectuals, instead of army officers as before. Alas, the re-grouping came too late. The Communist Army advanced steadily, unopposed. When the Vietnamese troops were abandoned by their leaders, their morale collapsed.

Meanwhile, the rush to the foreign embassies continued, especially to the American one. Some American soldiers exploited the situation by selling places on their cars or helicopters to rich Vietnamese and Chinese and helped them to board an American plane.

On the morning of the 30th April, I heard a rumble coming from the streets. I stepped outside my house and saw units of the Communist Army advancing from the outskirts to the Centre of Saigon, foot-soldiers, armoured cars, tanks and surface-to-air rockets. Previously, General Duong Van Minh, who had overthrown Ngo-dinh Diem's government in 1963, had succeeded President Tran Van Huong in the hope that he would be able to negotiate an 'honourable peace'. However, he was to be bitterly disillusioned and obliged to agree to an unconditional surrender.

When he made known this fact by the radio, many South Vietnamese officers of high rank committed suicide, soldiers stripped off their uniforms and abandoned their weapons (mostly the famous M.16 guns), and took to their heels. For me, it was a painful and humiliating sight. I never thought that 'our fight for democracy' could have ended so shamefully. Millions of Vietnamese, both civilians and soldiers, and 55,000 young Americans had met a violent death: many thousands more were wounded; over one hundred and twenty thousand million dollars had been spent, all to no avail.

I recalled the U.S.A. government's prediction of a 'blood-bath'. In fact, it did not happen as in Cambodia. But approximately one million men and women, who had worked in the South Vietnamese government or with the Americans, were and still are dying a slow but certain death in Re-education camps, through lack of food and medical care. And hundreds of thousands more perished and will perish in the South China sea.

To achieve the conquest of South Vietnam, the North Vietnamese army had taken only 55 days, advancing unopposed from the High Land of Central Vietnam to Saigon. It took them only 55 days to take prisoner an army of a million well-trained soldiers, equipped with modern weapons,

powerful planes and warships. In 55 days, they had destroyed the civilised world's hope of making out of South Vietnam a free and democratic country. In 55 days they made true the late President Johnson's prophecy that the Vietnamese Communists would win the Vietnam war in Washington rather than on the battle-field.

The entire new-born government of President Duong Van Minh was held prisoner in the Independence Palace. Almost all the ministers were eventually sent to re-educational camps. Within a few weeks the new government revealed itself as the most corrupt Vietnam has ever known. As power corrupts, so absolute power corrupts absolutely. Law exists only on paper. The only law known to the Vietnamese-in-the-street is the 'law of the jungle'.

After the 'liberation', the Police controlled all Vietnamese's activities: political, educational and economical. Food rationing was stringent. As a result, food prices in Saigon varied from day to day. The same situation still operates. Rotten rice and vegetables that in the past would have been fed to pigs, now feed men. The cooperatives have insufficient food to sell to the population, because the peasants are unwilling to supply them with the products of their fields at a financial loss: consequently, the peasants cultivate only a small part of their land, sufficient for their own needs and a small surplus to be sold on the black market. To remedy this situation, the Hanoi government decreed that the police should not prevent the peasants from transporting their goods to Saigon. Only too happy with such 'liberal' measures the peasants hastened to bring their goods to the capital. But, in spite of the central government's order, the police continued to confiscate food as before.

A few weeks after the 'liberation', everyone who had worked in the South Vietnamese government, in its army or legislative body, as well as members of political parties, had to report to the police. After that, many who had occupied a high position were sent to the dreaded re-education camps scattered all over the country from the frontier of China to the areas bordering the South Sea. My son-in-law, who was a surgeon-captain in the South Vietnamese Army, was held in one of these camps for about three years. As long as he was a prisoner, my daughter (his wife) had to stay in the country to take care of him. She was allowed to see him once a month and to bring him food and medicine.

When the civilised world, alarmed by the fate of 'boat-people', convened a conference in Geneva, Vietnam was invited. During that conference the government of Vietnam promised to do all that was in its power to check the exodus of Vietnamese in boats, permitting each month about 10,000 people to leave on planes chartered by the United Nations and foreign governments who had consented to accept the responsibility. My family was among them. My wife, my daughter, my grand-daughter and myself, with the help of the United Nations and the Government of West Germany, boarded a plane for Berlin on the 17 July 1980. My son-in-law was released after a 26 month detention on August 31, 1977, and managed to leave the country.

Foreigners who have the privilege of visiting Vietnam either as journalists, diplomats or tourists see and hear only what the Vietnamese government permits them to see and hear. If the Communists are good at war, they are extremely bad at administration and management. They confiscate, for their own consumption, rice and meat that the peasants bring clandestinely from the countryside to the towns. For the population, food must be bought on the black market and is very expensive.One kilo of eatable rice, for instance, costs in average 6 dong (1.20 US dollar) and the price is constantly increasing. One kilo of meat costs at the present time up to 40 dong (8 US dollars). An average salary is 50 dong (10 US dollars) a month, although only privileged people have a job. A family with four children, i.e. of six people, even when father and mother are both working, (which is rare) must live on 100 dong (20 US dollars) per month. They require about a minimum of 70 kilos of rice in a month for the two main daily meals. Breakfasts cost about 1 dong per head for adults and half a dong for children. A little calculation shows that the average family cannot have enough to eat. The government has no currency to import necessary goods such as clothing and medicines. To remedy the situation, the government encourages the cultivation of medicinal plants and practice of the medicine of olden times.

People who have a close relative abroad can get money, medicine and clothes from them regularly. They are fortunate people! One hundred dollars a month from a son abroad is worth 500 dong, the salary of 10 workers. Any surplus of goods can be sold at a high price on the black market—if they are not bought directly by the government at the official price, the very moment they are delivered in Vietnam.

The people who have nobody abroad to care for them—and they are the vast majority—are living miserably, especially the towns-people who have no land to cultivate for food. Any little strip of ground in front of their houses is planted with sweet potatoes or cassava to supplement a meagre diet, provided the plants are not stolen at night by starving individuals.

To sum up, the food situation in Vietnam may be described as hopeless. Children are stunted for lack of nourishing food and the next generation will be under-developed and seriously degenerated intellectually and morally. Yet they will be devoted to communism, as they are all indoctrinated in school from early childhood.

Discontent is general among the population; but as they are not organised into a political force they cannot express their views. Besides being a communist country, Vietnam is also a police state. Opposition is quickly nipped in the bud.

What will the future hold for Vietnam? Any attempt to answer the question can only be conjecture. The world to-day is complicated by the emergence of superpowers such as Russia and China. At the present time, Vietnam depends on Russia for survival. But the Russian Empire has shown signs of a decline and history has taught us that no empire is everlasting. What then, if Russia can no longer afford the luxury of

keeping a foot-hold in South East Asia? China is a colossal neighbour, and many Chinese, even those from Taiwan, like to think of Vietnam as a Chinese province. This does not mean that China will seek to colonize Vietnam as the French once did. The idea of such a colonisation is a European one, born from the industrial revolution in the 18th century, and this policy has served its time. No country, however powerful, can resume this policy in its original form. More likely China will attempt to create a kind of Federation in which a place is reserved for Vietnam in return for loyalty and allegiance. Politics and Economy are dictated by geography. Can Vietnam escape such a Fate? Possibly not, because no small country can remain completely independent of a powerful neighbour.

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[Born in Hadong province, ten miles from Hanoi, Nghiem Xuan Thien worked as an engineer for a French factory and joined the first Vietnamese independent government originally as an acting Inspector-general of mines and industry. Later, he served as a Minister of State in charge of the governance of North Vietnam. In 1955 he was appointed Editor of the well-known weekly, *Thoi-Luan,* in which he strongly criticised Ngo dinh Diem's government. The paper was closed down. Thien was subjected to a heavy fine and prison sentence. Released in 1963, the day of Diem's fall from power, he resumed publication of *Thoi-Luan* and was later invited to become a visiting professor at the University of South Illinois, USA. He was subsequently appointed by the President of the South Vietnam Republic a member of the National Council for Culture and Education. As a journalist, he has visited more than twenty countries all over the world, sometimes participating in the General Assembly of the International Press Institute. Now retired, he is living with his family in West Berlin.]

# THE IRRELEVANCE OF POLITICS

## by Sir Alex Smith

POLITICS are irrelevant. That, at any rate, would seem to be an inescapable conclusion from a study of our national performance over the last thirty years or so in earning a living as a nation amongst the community of nations, and from a study of the growth of unemployment. We, as a nation, need to earn a living, and we are failing to do so. We are at something of a crisis in our history. Yet crisis is too bland a word to describe our condition. A crisis has about it the nature of an emergency, which can be corrected or ameliorated by emergency measures. What we are experiencing is properly called a climacteric, a prolonged period of steady decline which needs much more profound measures to correct it.

To sustain our people, our way of life, and our industries, we in Britain have need of food, fuel and raw materials or semi-finished manufactures from the rest of the world. In exchange for these we can offer the output of our skills; these are mainly of two kinds—in the manufacturing of goods and the provision of services. The main component in this business of earning our living is the manufacture of goods for export, and the record of our deteriorating performance in international competition for the acceptance of our goods is much reported.

I would like to present that record in a very different and revealing way. In Figure 1 I have plotted the yearly totals of imports and exports of manufactured goods on a logarithmic scale, so that a steady rate of growth appears as a straight line. The figures used are taken from the statistical information published by government, and in Figure 1 I have plotted the imports and exports yearly from 1950 to 1965.

It is clear that the pattern of exports between 1950 and 1960 shows a fairly good straight line; with imports there is rather more of a scatter, yet it is not too difficult to draw a reasonable straight line through these points.

An extrapolation of these two straight lines gives clear warning of steadily worsening circumstances, with imports of manufactured goods catching up with exports around 1980. That was the time—in the mid-sixties—when we were given to believe that 'the white heat of the technological revolution' would be the making of us; it was the time of 'you've never had it so good', and propaganda gestures like National Productivity Year. It was also the time at which the country made two education decisions of major importance which, taken in conjunction, I regard as calamitous. The first was to accept the recommendations of the Robbins report to expand rapidly the provision of university full-time higher education. The second—a very sad and regrettable decision—was the decision to ignore the recommendations of the Henniker-Heaton Committee to expand the education provision for those young people who were already at work—day release education.

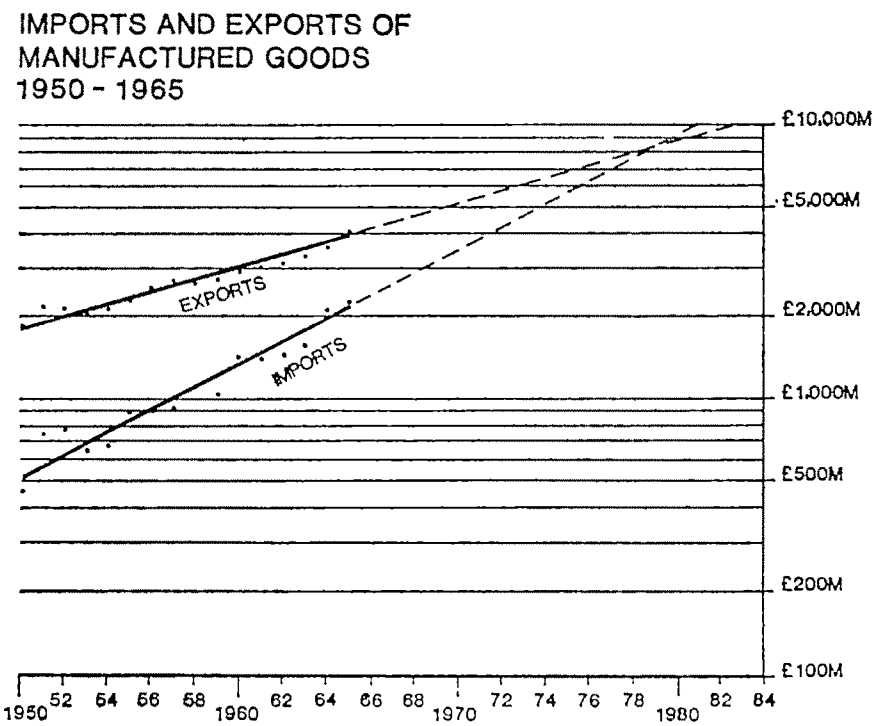


*Figure 1*

> It is vitally important (said the Henniker-Heaton report) for the future well-being of the nation and for our industrial prosperity that the proportion receiving day release should be rapidly increased.

and went on to add that:

> We appeal for the interest and active assistance of every individual who is in a position to further this work in his personal, official or industrial capacity. The task is of immediate national importance.

The task was indeed of immediate national importance, but it went unheeded. The country opted for a large expansion of the universities to provide full-time degree education, and it neglected the education of those young people who had left school and gone straight to work. It is my belief that our present anaemic economic condition is rooted in these two related education decisions. I think that we deserve our present economic circumstances, so badly did we make our basic decisions.

Figure 2 carries on the plots of Figure 1 up to the present. An upturn has occurred in the trends and this is largely due to the devaluation of our currency which happened throughout the seventies. Nevertheless, the steady convergence towards crisis conditions is clearly evident.

There are two very important aspects of these trends on which I particularly want to comment. The first is the obviousness of it all. The past three decades are really a dreadful chronicle of unheeded alarm signals and wasted time. Our present national predicament has clearly been in

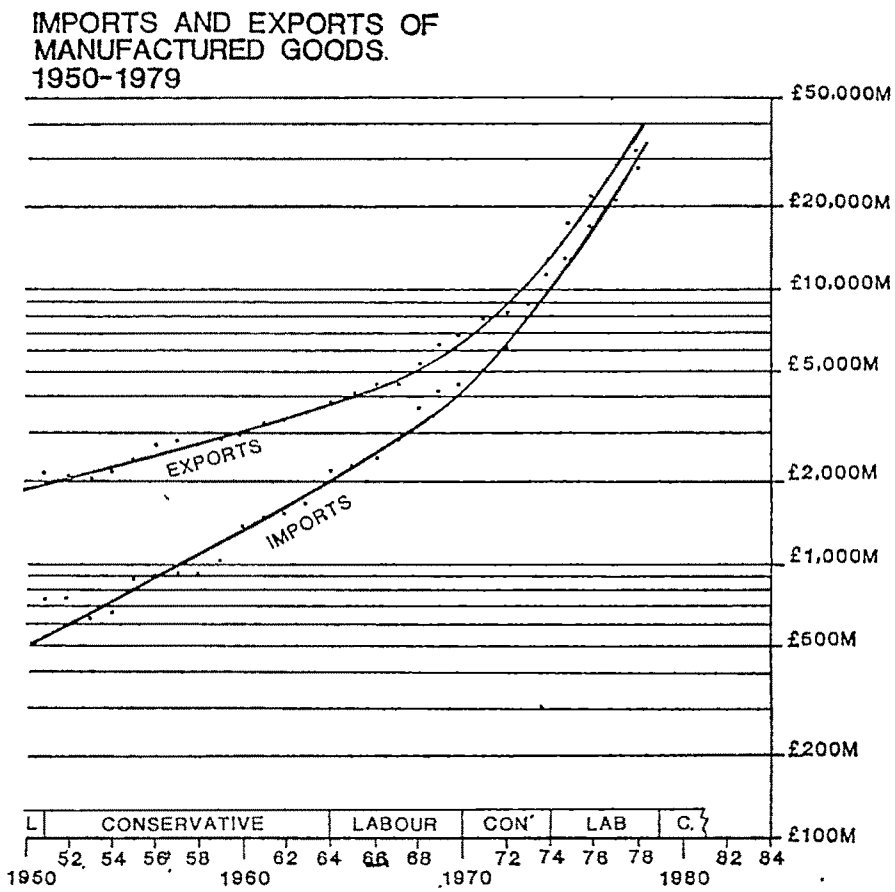


*Figure 2*

the making for a long time, and our national institutions—government, the unions, the education service—have all ignored the gathering evidence.

The second important point is the obduracy of these trends. Manifestly, nothing that has happened in the last thirty years has affected them. They have been unaffected by the great expansion of university education or the increasing number of economists with all their outpouring of economic argument; the Social Contract or National Productivity Year; and they have been unaffected by politics. In Figure 2 the periods of Labour and Conservative governments are indicated, and it is quite impossible to discern any alteration in the trends which can be correlated with changes in government.

Much the same conclusion emerges when one looks at the growth over the years in the number of unemployed, as in Figure 3.

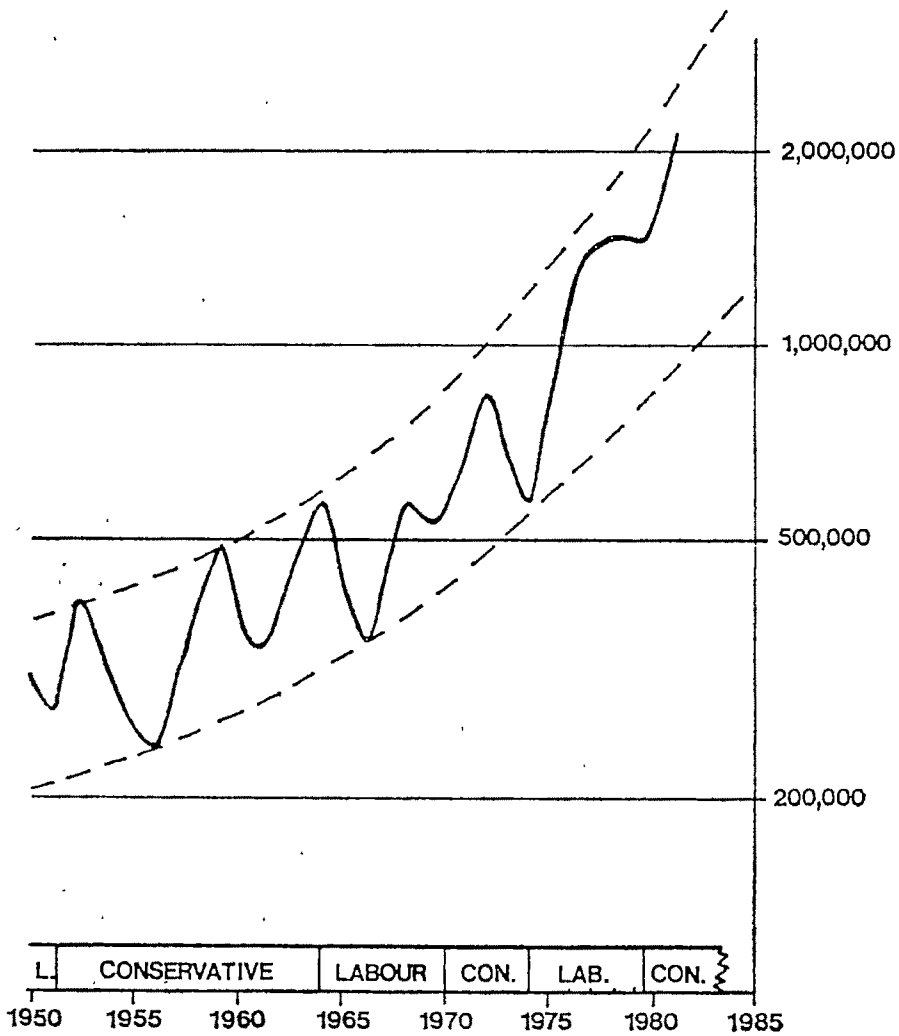


*Figure 3*

Behind all the booms and recessions a steady growth has been occurring, and the country is heading inexorably for unemployment levels of several million. There was much anguish and political mud-slinging last year when the figure topped the two million mark; it was a bit hypocritical, for this level of unemployment has been more or less programmed in to our ways of doing things and has been developing for years. Political actions may affect the 'noise' in the unemployment figures but, as Figure 3 shows, they have no influence on the underlying growth trend.

The growth in unemployment which is now haunting the lives of men and women is the most daunting trend in our social well-being. The rising

tensions are ominous, and an intolerable burden of trouble is accumulating. So, politics are irrelevant. I think that the situation is actually worse than that, for the nation is diverted from a serious consideration of our national condition by the unedifying spectacle of the two major political parties hurling knockabout abuse at each other, each claiming to have in their political wisdom the answers to our problems.

It can of course be argued that North Sea oil will give us relief from the economic hardship confronting us. True, it will, but it is as though we have suddenly found some money in the bank, or acquired a legacy from nature. We must see it for what it is—a capital sum—and we must not treat it as income. Sir Ieuan Maddock recently described North Sea oil as an anaesthetic; blotting out sensitivity to our predicament and numbing our capacity to think.

So what is to be done? We are confronted by the problem of how a successful civilisation can avoid decline into decadence. Societies can reach heights of tremendous vigour and make immense contributions to life and to posterity, and then the vigour seems to ebb away and they decline into decadence and obscurity. There is no reason why our particular form of society should have a long tenure; indeed it will be an historical anomaly if it endures. The rise and fall of societies is well documented, and Gibbon's great work of two hundred years ago is very relevant today. The lessons of history are against us.

Assuming, however, that we do want our form of society to prevail, and to develop rather than to decline, let us start with a simple definition of the requirements that are confronting us. These are, firstly, that:

We, as a nation, need to earn a living;

and, secondly, that:

Men and women need work.

I start from the proposition that, unless we fulfil these two requirements, we are not going to have much of a civilisation here in this country. As they stand, these are not sufficient conditions for a civilised society, but I assert that they are necessary conditions.

If these are necessary conditions for having a civilised society, it follows that all citizens and all of our social institutions should be fully aware of them and work towards their fulfilment. If, for example, the way in which we as a nation earn a living is founded upon the skills of designing and making, then we should all respect and value those skills. We do not seem to do so at present. Throughout the whole of our society we show little respect for the skills of designing and making. This is particularly true of our education service, and indeed in many of our schools these very skills are referred to as the 'noddy' subjects, fit only for the less able in the community.

One wonders why we put up with the distortion of the meaning of that excellent word 'ability' so that it is narrowed to mean ability in analysis, and the fine talents that many human beings have in their capacity to conceive patterns in their minds and to make these patterns into real things with their hands are deemed to be the talents of the less

able. It is a distortion made by academics to suit their own ends, so that talents which they do not favour are relegated to an inferior status. It was H. G. Wells who asserted that 'the pedagogues watered learning down to scholarship': Yet it is on these very talents of designing and making that the survival of our particular form of civilised society depends: Despite the evidence that has existed now for decades of our deteriorating performance in earning a living, there is no strategy for education to cope with it. Of what should such a strategy consist? Chief among a number of aims I would place the following two:

1) Every educated person ought to understand how the nation earns its living. This should be an integral part of the make-up of an educated person, as significant as the understanding of literature, science and history.
2) The activities of designing and making should be regarded as being, at the fundamental stage, every bit as important as reading, writing and arithmetic, and at the more advanced stages, as important as literature, science, and history. Every child in every school, every year, should be involved in a designing and making activity, on the grounds that, in its own right, it is a very valuable educational approach.

The second aim is in my view the really important key. 'What is this design?' Sir Hugh Casson asked in a lecture in Oxford in 1979, and he gave as his answer: 'I will put it at its simplest. To design is to decide'.

Personally, I think this is an oversimplification. I would prefer to say: To design is to make a coherent set of decisions. It is my view that this activity of designing and making ought to be the spinal column of the school curriculum for all pupils.

Education through designing and making would:

(i) Foster the ability to think through a whole problem.
(ii) Develop a respect for skills.
(iii) Foster the ability to make a coherent set of decisions.

We do not give any attention in education to the skill of making a coherent set of decisions. We are very good at educating in maths or physics or English, but making a coherent set of decisions is a very different skill, every bit as much in need of being developed. It may well be that it is because we give so little attention to this skill in the fundamentals of our education that our national decision-making is not very coherent. As a result, the Concorde was not a coherent set of decisions and thus the efforts of many of our most able manhood have been invested in a financial fiasco. You can have a dozen Finniston reports and set up a dozen British Engineering Authorities. They will have little effect if the plant that is our industrial culture has its roots in unfriendly soil. But to return to the two necessary requirements which I said were confronting us to earn a living as a nation and to give men work. They are necessary requirements for a civilised society, but they are not sufficient, for they say nothing at all about worthwhileness of purpose. Every day on the radio you can hear experts holding forth on the economic aspects of our condition, on minimum lending rates, public sector borrowing requirements, investment, monetarism, macroeconomics, import con-

trols, inflation rates, or 10%, 15%, 20% wage settlements, with never a word about the importance of a worthwhile purpose. We need to earn a living as a nation certainly, but the means whereby we accomplish this ought to be consistent with a civilised community. There is no moral code or purpose in much of our industrial and commercial culture. Its purpose is affluence but after affluence, what then? Material gain seems to bring little satisfaction. Indeed, I have heard a distinguished leader of the Christian church arguing that God is reducing our standard of living because it has been achieved for too long at the expense of the standard of living of others! That seems to me to be a perfectly tenable viewpoint for a Christian to take.

I remember that, in my time as Chairman of the Schools Council, I had to deal with a fair volume of criticism of the schools by industry. I know of quite a number of industries that will do far more damage to human beings than the worst-run school, yet there is never a word of criticism of those industries by industrialists, and I often wished that some of them who were so eager to voice their criticisms of the schools might direct their critical appraisal towards their fellow industrialists. There are some cynical practices in our industrial and commercial culture, and sensitive men cry out at the dehumanising nature of what happens when there is no adherence to a basic moral code. The means whereby we earn our living must be basically a virtuous activity, and much of it at present is not. It is not enough to say that we need to earn a living and that men and women need work. We need to qualify both these statements along such lines as:

1) We, as a nation, need to earn a living through means which are consistent with being a civilised cultured community, a means which people can respect and support, and in which they can take pride.
2) Men and women need work, interesting satisfying work, work that gives them their dignity, work that is their culture.

We need an engineering-led spiritual reawakening with a sensitivity to what is virtuous and worthwhile in life as well as what is technologically possible. We must make a coherent set of decisions towards that end, and the onus lies mainly with the education service; yet I fear that the task will require more imaginative energy and drive than is available. But, on this issue I hope very much that I am wrong.

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[From 1968 to 1971 Sir Alex Smith was the Goldsmith's Special Professor in the University of Nottingham. He took up his appointment as Director of Manchester Polytechnic in September 1969. He was Chairman of the Committee of Directors of Polytechnics for two years from April 1974 to April 1976, and was a member of the University Grants Committee from 1974 to 1976. He became Chairman of the Schools Council in October 1975 and retired in April 1978. He is a Member of the BBC General Advisory Council.]

# LOVIN' NEW YORK

## by John Elsom

IT has been proved beyond reasonable doubt that New York is a state of mind. Five years ago, it was generally reckoned that New York was sinking into the Hudson. The city was chronically in debt, the social services were breaking down where they hadn't already, violence stalked the streets looking for stray members of the middle-classes to mug and the middle-classes in consequence were moving out. The new genre in painting was aerosol graffiti, the new *art trouvé*—a parking lot, with hydrant.

Only hardened New Yorkers, recidivists to a man, would protest that the image of this urban prison had been much exaggerated. New York was still a neighbourly place if you picked the right neighbourhood. You could still sit around and chat in the Algonquin, where neither the decor nor the waiters had much changed since the days of Dorothy Parker and Alexander Woolcott. Their round table in the restaurant still welcomed wits. There were still second-hand bookshops in Lower Manhattan which specialised in such outlandish subjects as Tibetan art or Ukrainian literature. There were still pretzel vendors on street corners, and local delicatessens stuffed to their ceilings with many kinds of sausages, *pâtés* and glossy, glowing fruit, and hamburger parlours and pizzerias where college kids, working their ways, would bid you to 'Have a nice day' as they added a bonus gherkin. If New York really was falling to pieces, well perhaps, like the broom chopped up by the sorcerer's apprentice, all the bits had their independent lives.

Such observations did not satisfy those who were not New Yorkers. If Washington bore the brunt of Watergate, and the Pentagon for Vietnam, New York took its full share of a backlash against all East Coast liberals and sophisticates. They were the ones who couldn't balance the books or sweep their backyards. Among the many more dramatic images of what was wrong with America, the nightly drip-drip-drip of a city proving itself ungovernable reminded those who came from the Mid-West or the Deep South that when the immediate troubles were out of the way, there remained others more deeply set, less prone to quick analysis, which would take a long time to solve—and were perhaps insoluble.

To some, New York was the living example of what that prototype liberal, John Kennedy Galbraith, described as 'private affluence and public squalor'—all those sleek office blocks of Manhattan's skyline with their surrounding moats of shabby streets, all those padded and mirrored elevators which whisked you to the 70th floor before you had time to gulp while below, in the burrows of an antique subway system, citizens' bands would collect to protect the travellers against the modern bandits and highwaymen, the drug addicts on the prowl for the means to another fix. While private art collections and libraries grew in size and splendour, the public libraries restricted the hours at which they were open, cheese-

paring economies which, the authorities figured, would cause no trouble because aren't we, for heaven's sake, in a television age? But what was the answer to these problems? Tougher cops, more public spending, the re-birth of Christianity? Was 'private squalor and public affluence' a preferable alternative? Was it even, given the political complexion of America, at all practical?

It would be a bold man, or a New Yorker, who could suggest that any of these problems have been solved; but New York's image has certainly changed. It is now the city to love, and the transformation has come about through good old American methods, salesmanship and publicity. The 'I love New York' campaign, with a little red heart for the first 'o', has caught on everywhere—for lapel badges, T-shirts, socks and underpants—and has been imitated in other countries, so that now, if you just see the word love or a small red heart, your second thoughts are likely to be of New York. It is an extraordinary campaign, so simple, so devastating, as if Wisconsin had cornered the market in motherhood; for if New York is presented as a lovable city—not for the frenetic, the ambitious or the wastrels—it can be forgiven for its shortcomings. Love, as Hollywood has told us, means never having to say you're sorry.

To back up the campaign, or vice versa, some gambles have been taken, of which the most spectacular are the two aluminium-clad towers of the World Trade Center on the southern tip of Manhattan Island, the second tallest buildings in the world, where you can actually look down on the Empire State. Twelve years ago, this area was a run-down maze of streets, the forgotten site of the Washington Market, where little electronic shops rivalled with goods yards and depots and tried to forget their proximity to Wall Street. It was the end of the line—if only for the subway trains carrying tourists to the Statue of Liberty ferry.

The project was attacked from the start—it was vastly expensive, based on no more reliable forecast than the hunch that it should be there, and the risks of failure, in a city accustomed to failure but ruthless with it, were high. The critics insisted that it would be a folly to match the cultural folly of the Lincoln Center, or the diplomatic folly of the United Nations complex, which has proved over the years that the nations are rarely united nor prone to be grateful to the United States. Who would want to go downtown, when the heart of New York (although this was before the days when hearts started to glow from lapel badges) was obviously elsewhere—in Central Park, Fifth Avenue, for some Harlem and, for me, a British outsider nuts about the theatre, Broadway.

Once more, the critics argued, a bankrupt city had tried to spend its way out of trouble, and predictably on the wrong things, on more pretentious development and not on the nuts and bolts of city administration. But when the World Trade Center arose from the dereliction of empty sites, there seemed something appropriately definitive about this over-sized full-stop to Manhattan Island. From its top-floor restaurants, Windows on the World, you can survey the whole panorama of Manhattan, while in another direction there lies the harbour with the Statue

of Liberty and Staten Island. It is as if a relief map of New York had been placed at your feet.

The Windows on the World restaurants, run by the Hilton chain, have become a place to take tourists, to show them what they're supposed to be loving, a venue for conferences and private parties, a ramp for launches, a rendezvous, a discretionary zone for business meetings, a family eat-in. All tastes, public and private, are anticipated—from the casual lunch to the formal dinner in the Cellar in the Sky, where a set meal (no unnecessary mulling over menus) is planned around a remarkable selection of wines. The bare statistics tell part of the success story. 25,000 people eat in the restaurants of the World Trade Center *every day:* the annual sales of wine are equivalent to the total daily sales of wine throughout the rest of the United States. This multi-billion dollar folly has become a symbol of the new New York, where the old pioneering energy, which had been dissipated in ethnic rancour, once more was harnessed to show the world what America can do, when it sets its mind to it.

Of course, an adjustment to the profile does not constitute a face-lift; nor does even a face-lift bring back youth—and those same New Yorkers who once protested that things were not as bad as they seem, now shrug their shoulders at the thought that life in the city is any better than it was. It's still unsafe to walk in Central Park late in the evening, foolhardy for a white to stroll unaccompanied by a black through Harlem. Roads are still being dug up without proper deviation signs for traffic and the rubbish still gets collected apparently by whim rather than routine. But the mess of New York, which once seemed so unattractive to all but New Yorkers, now seems lovable to all but New Yorkers. Tourists are flocking back and the theatres on Broadway, recently the road of the Fallen Angels, are enjoying a boom.

Part of the secret is financial. By British standards, New York theatre prices are extremely high, with 25 dollars an average stalls seat price, rising to 50 dollars for such smash-hit musicals as *42nd Street.* For most middle-income earners, such prices seem excessive, and to visitors from Britain, accustomed to a top price of between £6 to £8, or 15 dollars, they are exorbitant. In 1979, however, two cut-price ticket booths were opened, in Times Square and Wall Street, where you can obtain, on the day of the performance, the unsold tickets at little more than half-price. Most theatre managements now participate in this scheme, which has had several effects—to fill up the empty seats, to stimulate the habit of theatre-going among the middle-income groups and tourists and, with the proceeds accruing to the Theatre Development Fund (which operates the scheme, TKTS), money has been made available to assist small and struggling companies, particularly ballet workshops, with the result that theatre in New York, on Broadway and off, has generally benefited.

It would be pleasant to suggest that this financial improvement has led to a general improvement of theatrical standards, or even to bigger and plusher versions of what we know that Broadway can do so well, musicals.

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Broadway is still dominated by musicals, but none is of the calibre of *Sweeney Todd* or *West Side Story.* There is the Disney jollity of *Barnum* with Jim Dale, or the instant nostalgia of *42nd Street,* the choreography of *Dancin',* or the smoothness of Neil Simon's *They're Playing Our Song;* while two old timers, *Chorus Line* and *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas,* are battling on at the Shubert and 46th Street. There are the compilation musicals, such as *Ain't Misbehavin'* compiled from Fats Waller's hits, and *One Mo' Time,* from New Orleans songs of the 1920s. But the surprise success of the 1980/81 season is an old-timer indeed, from Britain too, *The Pirates of Penzance,* in a dashing, electric production from Joseph Papp's Public Theater.

Gilbert and Sullivan lovers, who tend to be purist, will probably not appreciate this version. Gilbert's stage instructions have been zealously ignored; and the music, which includes two songs from other operas, has been so amplified that it pins you to the seat. The words are not always easy to hear, even when George Rose, whose diction is impeccable, is singing the part of the Major-General. When the words can be heard, there is an uncertainty as to what Gilbert really meant by them. Gilbert's own satirical edge was swamped by a general send-up of the whole story, so that, for example, the policeman's lot, which is not a happy one, was played in the style of the Keystone Kops, with a rubber-jointed Sergeant (Tony Azito) who could do anything with his arms and legs apparently, but nothing with the straight-faced lugubriousness of the lyrics.

To dedicated Savoyards, this *Pirates of Penzance* must seem a travesty, but for me, it was enormous fun. The director, Wilford Leach, broke away from the proscenium arch tradition, providing a toy-theatre frame-work centre-stage, around which (rather than through) the action tumbled. A full-sailed pirates' galleon hove into sight, within minutes of the overture, with desperadoes hanging from every spit, and a thin, swarthy, moustached Pirate King (Kevin Kline) swashbuckling with whomsoever cared to swash and buckle. Ruth, a Pirate Maid, was played by Estelle Parson as a Disney granny, all grey hair and knitting needles; and the whole production had a relentless Broadway attack, most startling perhaps in that fine, familiar chorus, 'With Cat-like Tread, Upon our Prey We Steal', which was given the full chorus-line treatment, with giant kicks and enormous strides on the first and third beats in the bar.

It was decidedly odd to visit a booming revived Broadway and to hear everyone talking about Gilbert and Sullivan; but this is the kind of chance occurrence which one has begun, even in Britain, to associate with Joseph Papp's Public Theater. Joseph Papp, with his New York Shakespeare Festival and large converted warehouse in Lafayette Street, has created the sort of organisation which many expected the Lincoln Center to become. (Papp indeed ran the two Lincoln Center theatres, from 1973 to 1977 before giving up in despair.) Its classic productions are populist in tone, its control of the idiom of popular musicals is shown by its string of successes including *A Chorus Line* and *I'm Getting My Act Together,*

while its studio theatres act as host for visiting Off-off Broadway companies as well as initiating productions on their own account. The Public Theater offered three such fringe productions when I was there in February, carefully contrasted—an example of performance-art, *Penguin Touquet* by Richard Foreman, a documentary against nuclear power, *Dead-End Kids* by JoAnne Akalaitis, and *Mary Stuart* by Wolfgang Hildesheimer, a broad, Germanic slash against the phoney romanticism surrounding Mary Stuart's execution.

The broadly based, unstuffy, intelligent and adventurous programmes of the Public Theater provides New York's equivalent to the major repertory theatres in other cities in the States and Europe — to the Royal Shakespeare Company and the National in Britain, to the ACT in San Francisco; although its colouring comes distinctly from New York, always sacrificing anything which smacks of pedantry or elitism, to anything which offers energy and immediacy. Broadway owes much to the repertory movement: both the National Theatre and the RSC are well represented on Broadway—with the NT's *Amadeus* and the RSC's *Piaf* both packing the Broadhurst and Plymouth Theatres with what one disgruntled Broadway director described to me as 'cultural kitsch'.

It is a view with which I have much sympathy, because one effect of the repertory movement throughout Western theatre is to leave the impression that many productions we see have very shallow roots, the updated Shakespeares or even Gilbert and Sullivans, the token attempts at classics based on a four-week rehearsal period, the tendency to talk about art and artists (as *Amadeus* talks about Mozart, and *Piaf* about Piaf) instead of encouraging a more authentic creative process. The contrast between this 'cultural kitsch' and the real stuff is very evident in New York, particularly when Alberta Hunter (an American Piaf) is still singing at the Cookery in Greenwich Village.

Miss Hunter is in her mid-eighties. She was born in Memphis and ran away to Chicago at the age of about 11, although she isn't quite sure, because she heard she could earn 10 dollars a week singing at clubs. After the first World War, she sang with Duke Ellington, and recorded with King Oliver and Fats Waller, wrote songs for Bessie Smith and was the first black singer to make a record with a white band. It would be foolish to pretend that Miss Hunter's voice has retained the range and clarity of her youth; but what her singing does reveal is an ingrained sense of style, so that when she sings 'A good man is hard to find' the little falsetto ornaments and the gruff grunts are perfectly in keeping with the line of the melody, and above all, she seems to sing from the depth of her experience, which nobody else can imitate. Jane Lapotaire's version of Piaf is a marvellous impersonation, but it could never be confused with Piaf herself; whereas when Alberta Hunter sings of loneliness and the blues, we know that she wrote the song, sometimes literally so.

It may be hard to imitate an Alberta Hunter, but the tradition which she represents has been carried on in an uninterrupted way. The difference between a travesty musical (like *The Pirates of Penzance)* and one

which grows naturally out of its tradition, such as *Aint Misbehavin'* or *One Mo' Time,* lies not in the quality of the words or the music, but in the experience of the performers. The formula of *One Mo' Time* is rather second-rate, a perfunctory story about how black performers were exploited in the 1920s by white theatre-owners which is merely an excuse for a collection of New Orleans songs; but when the four main artists—Sylvia 'Kuumba' Williams, Topsy Chapman, Thais Clark and Bruce Strickland—are let loose on the songs which they have known since their childhoods, the results are a revelation; the sheer range of innuendo, the freedom and discipline of the dancing and singing, the certainty coming from an inherent knowledge.

It is tempting indeed to look at the whole New York theatre scene and to separate the productions into 'kitsch' and 'authentic' categories, with sub-divisions—the Rockettes at Radio City Music Hall being Kitsch Absolute, proving that sex can be mass-produced and sterilised like any other consumer product, and Charles Ludlam's Theatre of the Ridiculous, being Kitsch Self-conscious, so purposefully bad that the send-ups of absurdity lose their point by being so doggedly pursued. There are also Kitsch Cultural (*Amadeus*), Kitsch Historic (*The Elephant Man*) and Kitsch Enlightened (*Children of a Lesser God,* a kind of reverse *Pygmalion,* where a deaf-and-dumb girl marries her teacher but refuses to learn to speak until he recognises that she has her own individual self, which must be respected). There is also Kitsch Redundant, at the bottom of the heap, where yesterday's marketable charm has not yet become tomorrow's fashion (*Brigadoon*).

The circumstances of Broadway encourage *kitsch,* in that success and failure are instantly known and recognised, with little time for deliberation. Shows have to be marketed quickly and effectively, and have to catch the eyes, not just of tourists but of all those New York residents to whom theatre-going has become (despite TKTS) an expensive luxury. The habit of theatre-going with its consequent mulling over productions and performances, comparing one version with another, is less engrained than in London. But there is a positive, as well as negative, side to *kitsch,* for the butterfly hunter has an innocent eye. He may mistake tinfoil for silver, lacquer for real gold, and hamming, unfocussed performances for great acting; but there is a kind of eagerness to know, a greed for fashion, which retains its own vitality. There is so much enthusiasm of all kinds in New York so that, even when it seems misdirected, it carries you along into new experiences, ideas and ways of life.

That is why the 'I love New York' slogan—itself an example of Kitsch Infectious—is not so inappropriate. Such love may be blind, compulsive, over-energetic and, in a sense, disposable, like childhood passions. But through such passions you learn, if only how quickly to adapt. New York, one weary sophisticated New Yorker admitted to me, having deplored the city's lack of cultural stability, is 'an education in itself'. He was right, of course, not only in the sense that New York teaches others, but that it is in itself in a continual process of learning and discovery.

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# POEM

## KOSCIUSKO PARK WAR MEMORIAL

These are the elders sitting around
the stuffed canon, sucking with
thin breath on clay pipes,
talking forgotten tongues
spiced with their children's talk.

Wrinkled suits and holes in the soles
of their sunday shoes,
holes in the thin socks
on bone skinny feet
on bone tired men

talking about the days
when their feet took them looking
for the gold cobblestones.

Three old men on benches six feet long
watching the children waiting for their seats.

These are the streets I tramped as a child
how long they seemed not so long ago
and there are the elders
filling their pipes
waiting for fire and smoke
to stir up dead souls.

Each black-screened window with its
white-hooded woman, her womb gone dry
years long ago in the past
now only knitting
rheumy eyes not looking
and dreaming of children
half naked in streets
begging and starving—no better off really.

Here, the streets I tramped as a child
how long they seemed not so long ago
and there are the bars and the pool-halls
as empty as the hearts of the players
wetting their lips and letting the liquid
brew in their bellies and burn away memories.

JOHN HORVATH

# COMMUNICATIONS—THE UNCERTAIN SOUND

## by J. I. H. Owen

MANY years ago when children were brought up to love or to fear God, depending upon their upbringing, and to believe that their schoolteachers were infinitely wise, prime ministers infallible and their fathers usually right, communication, prayers apart, was invariably downwards. Moreover, in the field of downwards communication, there were very few professions which surpassed the armed forces, for they spent considerable amounts of time and effort to develop the ability of their leaders, and potential leaders, to give orders.

The forces also developed, largely by design, the art of listening—for disobedience, even ignorance, of a downwards communication usually resulted in punishment, not only of the defaulter but often of the person giving the orders. Indeed, to assist in the achievement of good communication, the services developed a number of drills and acquired habits which would seem quaint nowadays, but which have a degree of logic which we should not ignore.

One was the requirement to give operational instructions in the same sequence on every possible occasion, so that those giving orders had a memory aid to follow whilst the listener knew when he had to listen and when he could indulge in day-dreaming. Another was intercommunication drill. This involved an equal number of officers, or NCOs, strung out and spaced apart at either end of a football field or a parade ground with the individuals at one end shouting drill instructions to their opposite numbers at the other. To an observer, the whole exercise was not unlike visiting day at a kennels, but all was not wasted for the drill taught the value of diction and the importance of concentrated listening.

A third aid was that of insisting upon orderlies and messengers repeating back the oral messages or instructions they were given in order to ensure that they had been correctly taken in. A final example is simply the matter of standing 'at attention', alert and ready to receive a series of orders or instructions which demanded instant compliance. Thus the standard of communication within the services was generally much higher than that found in civilian life. This was mainly due to the application of these and other drills.

Today, when so many schoolteachers seem to behave less well than the children they teach, when prime ministers are considered fallible and fathers are out of touch, communication tends to be upwards. This is partly due to the militancy of our times which, in turn, is so often brought about by poor downwards communication by management, who seem to be afraid to manage.

The majority of stoppages, misunderstandings and causes of low morale are due to poor communication (aided and abetted by rumour), but the balance of advantage in the field of communications still lies with the forces. Few servicemen should complain that they are not told what to

do, although it is only fair to say that the price for this plus point is that they are not included in the decision-making processes to the same extent as their civilian counterparts, other than at senior management level.

The flow of communication is a complex movement of inter-related pressures which provoke reaction and initiative throughout an organisation. It is only when communication is flowing well that the organisation can hope to be operating well. In simpler terms, there are three directions —sideways, downwards and upwards. Sideways communication is of critical importance to the coordination of planning and operations at whatever level it needs to be applied, especially as it affects the flow and feedback of professional, financial and technical (in the broad sense) information. If downwards communication is to be successful, it is necessary, first, to determine what it is that those who are managed want to know and ought to know to carry out their jobs properly and with satisfaction. Secondly, it is necessary to decide the best way of meeting their needs and, thirdly, to check that communication is being received and is understood. It is only against these criteria that it will be possible to form a judgement on the success or failure of our downwards communication.

Situations vary but, in general terms, the managed will wish to know:

What they have to do:
Why they have to do it:
How they are doing it:
What the terms and conditions for doing it are; in other words, what is in it for them?

Having decided what to communicate, it is necessary for management to decide the best way to communicate it. Each method has its advantages and its place but, generally speaking and in order of preference, the following should be used:

Face to face:
Down the line management chain:
By mass media (notice board, house magazine, meetings etc.):
By special representatives, but not by union officials or staff committees:

The only means of communication to be avoided like the plague is the grapevine which, although quicker, inevitably has a false message flowing in it. In this connection, the official leak is a dangerous card to play and can, with little difficulty, convert itself into a grapevine.

Successful upwards communication is more difficult if only because it consists of a larger number of people trying to communicate with a smaller number. The biggest single factor in successful upwards communication is the ability of management to manage well. If the leadership is good, the work force will generally accept its situation happily and work towards the firm's objectives. It is a concept that normally succeeds when the personality and the ability of the leadership is recognised right through the management chain and the work force has confidence in that leader-

ship and responds well to it. This, surely, is management at its best and again can be seen in a unitary organisation such as the armed forces.

In other 'plural' organisations, the problem is more difficult and management has to so guide, control and balance the various groups and their activities as to allow (encourage even) the maximum degree of initiative within those groups consistent with a common interest, the common purpose of the firm and the public image it wishes to create. Again good upwards communication depends upon the skill and ability of management. On the one hand, senior management is normally eager to know what the 'troops' are saying and thinking; on the other, the troops cannot wait to get at the 'general' to tell him (or her) what they think. In the centre lies middle management which, if the managers are good, often sees little merit in the troops talking to the general and if they are bad, actively doing its utmost to prevent the troops from so doing, lest its own shortcomings are quickly revealed.

Then, there is a matter of confidence; that is, the work force having confidence in itself. There are four aspects of this. One, confidence in having sufficient knowledge of the facts (from downwards communication) to be able to respond well. Two, confidence that one will not be looked upon as a 'bosses' man' and thus alienate one's colleagues and, three, having the confidence to control one's more militant and less responsible colleagues who may so aggravate management that it is not prepared to listen any longer. Fourth and finally, middle management having the confidence in itself to deal with upwards communication as it should be dealt with and to initiate and monitor progress of the action necessary to deal with the matters so raised.

Thus, upwards communication must be properly and formally structured by senior management right through the line management chain. It must completely involve middle management. In other words, each level of management must deal with the same layers of subordinates for upwards communication as it does (or should do) for downwards communication. There must be no popularity-seeking leapfrogging unless there is some overriding need for such an activity. There may well be such a need on those rare occasions when success or failure are in the balance. Similarly, it is axiomatic that the workforce must be confident enough to work through line management and not through other channels such as the staff committees, the welfare or personnel people, or the shop stewards, on management matters. Only if the matters to be raised are the direct concern and within the established province of the others, should these channels be used.

Time must be found and set aside for formal communication. It may not always be possible to get everybody there for the briefing or feed-back sessions but, if such sessions are well organised and run at regularly established intervals, the majority will usually find a way of attending In other words this process should be treated as a drill.

A lorry driver may not be able to design a truck and he may not be able to plan the maximum utilisation of his vehicle but, given the chance, he

will soon enunciate the faults of his lorry as well as the traffic and other problems he encounters. He is worth listening to and will be the happier for being given regular opportunities to express his views. Management, and especially middle management, must work hard in such fields of communication.

In radio operators' terms, they must set up their antennae, establish the right procedures and frequency, switch on, tune in, think before they speak and then speak clearly—and not for too long, for someone else is waiting to speak.

Indeed, we should all try and follow the example of the special air service troops when they were preparing to break the siege at the Iranian embassy not long ago. Throughout the planning, execution and aftermath of the operations, the level of communication between management and the managed, whether sideways, downwards or upwards, was of the highest order. Success was achieved and the nation smiled.

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[Major-General J. I. H. Owen has been Instructor at the Joint Senior Services Staff College and has attended the Royal College of Defence Studies. He is a contributor to Seaford House Papers (1971).]

# QUARTERLY RECORD REVIEW

## by David Fingleton

BERG. *Lulu.* Orchestre de l'Opéra de Paris/Boulez. (4 Records) DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2740 213.

WEBER. *Der Freischütz.* Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra & Chorus/Kubelik (3 Records) DECCA D235D 3.

VERDI. *Falstaff.* Philharmonia Orchestra & Chorus/Von Karajan. (2 Records) EMI SLS 5211.

MAHLER. Symphony No. 10. Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra/Rattle. (2 Records) EMI SLS 5206.

SHOSTAKOVICH. Symphony No. 10. New York Philharmonic Orchestra/ Mitropoulos. CBS CLASSICS 61457.

ELGAR. Cello Concerto/Overture 'In the South'/Elegy for Strings. Robert Cohen/ London Philharmonic Orchestra/Del Mar. CLASSICS FOR PLEASURE CFP 40342.

ALTHOUGH it was released eighteen months ago, Deutsche Grammophon's recording of Alban Berg's opera *Lulu* is of considerable current interest. This is because it was the first recording—following the Paris Opera production in 1979—of Berg's complete 3 act opera. The third act, left unfinished by the composer at his death in 1935, was suppressed by his widow Helene for over forty years, so that it was only after her death in 1976, and then despite her will, which sought to perpetuate the ban, that Berg's publishers, Universal in Vienna, were able to let in the experts. Although the American Berg scholar Professor George Perle had been allowed to examine the third act manuscript in 1963, it was the Viennese composer Friedrich Cerha who finally completed the opera: in fact a task largely of orchestration, for there was very little indeed that Berg had not composed at least in vocal score by the time of his death.

It was this three act version, completed by Cerha, that was staged at Covent Garden by the Royal Opera in February, in a production by Gotz Freidrich, conducted by Sir Colin Davis, and it is this London production that makes DG's admirable Paris recording so relevant. For without subsequent hearings on the gramophone the impact of this magnificent opera—perhaps more accurately described as 'Music Theatre'—cannot be fully absorbed, despite the dramatic power and musical clarity of the Covent Garden performances. So having seen *Lulu* staged at the Royal Opera House, how immensely useful it is to turn to this Paris recording conducted by Pierre Boulez.

It is fascinating to compare the Boulez approach with Sir Colin Davis's at Covent Garden. His is a far cooler, more analytical, almost clinical, treatment of the score, as one might perhaps have expected from this leading contemporary composer. Sir Colin, by contrast, gave *Lulu* a lusher, more overtly romantic treatment, yet, for all that, retained

remarkable clarity and balance. Nevertheless this Boulez recording serves admirably—at least until a rival one appears—and offers, as well as superb playing by the Paris Opera orchestra and an admirably clear and dramatic recording by DG, a remarkably strong cast.

Teresa Stratas may lack some of the sexuality, and kittenish quality, of Karan Armstrong at Covent Garden, but her Lulu is intensely expressive, and, some impossibly high coloratura aside, most accurately and musically sung. With her are Yvonne Minton as Countess Geschwitz, Fraz Mazura as Dr. Schön, Kenneth Riegel's Alwa and Robert Tear's Painter, and Toni Blankenheim quite superb as Schigolch. Nor should one forget Hanna Schwarz, first class as the Schoolboy, a marked improvement on her Covent Garden counterpart, and a shining example of the virtues of casting from strength. As I have suggested this is an indispensable issue, only marred by the regurgitation on the 8th side of the learned essays already to be found in the accompanying booklet. How much more valuable might some recordings of the rehearsals have been.

Weber's opera *Der Freischütz* tends to be underrated, and certainly the production staged at Covent Garden a few seasons ago did little to win converts to this seminally romantic work. Thanks to Decca's fine new recording, however, we may appreciate its true worth. Rafael Kubelik tackles this marvellous score with devoted enthusiasm, and without making Weber's music seem overblown he does nothing to diminish its drama or pathos. The love of Agathe for Max is beautifully handled, as is Annchen's music, and the Wolf's Glen scene has a powerfully eerie effect. This is assisted by one of Decca's finest recordings and by the highly accomplished playing of the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra which clearly has an enviable wind section. The cast is front rank, headed by René Kollo, suitably heroic as Max, and the wonderful Hildegard Behrens as an ideal Agathe—how expressively she speaks her dialogue, for which, on some earlier recordings, actors have been used instead of singers. Helen Donath has suitable sweetness as Annchen, and Peter Meven is a powerfully satanic Kaspar. I strongly recommend this issue.

I have yet to hear Herbert Von Karajan's new recording of Verdi's *Falstaff*, with the veteran baritone Giuseppe Taddei in the title role, for Philips, but I can most strongly recommend EMI's recent reissue of his much earlier, 1957, performance, now in excellent refurbished sound, with the Philharmonia playing at their consummate best, and on just two mid-price records: a bargain indeed. This is in any case surely one of the truly great performances of a Verdi opera on record, demonstrating Karajan's sheer mastery of the music, and boasting an almost matchless cast headed by the great Tito Gobbi, at his very greatest as Falstaff. Rolando Panerai sings Ford splendidly (as I gather he does over 20 years later on the new set), Luigi Alva is an ideal Fenton, and the ladies are simply first-class. Fedora Barbieri, that great Italian mezzo-soprano, is a perfect Mistress Quickly, Elisabeth Schwarzkopf a wonderfully vivid and dramatic Alice Ford, Nan Merriman is Meg Page, and

Anna Moffo an exquisite Nannetta. This is a beautiful set which should be absent from no opera-lover's record library.

Another of my recommendations this quarter concerns the posthumous completion of a major work. When Gustav Mahler died in 1911 he left the 10th Symphony, which had caused him such forebodings, as little more than a series of sketches. Thanks to the painstaking scholarship of the late Deryck Cooke these sketches became a performing version in 1966, which Cooke revised in 1974. It is this version which one of our most promising and exciting young conductors, Simon Rattle, has now recorded with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra. Thanks to Cooke's musical intelligence and Rattle's conviction the result is remarkably persuasive, and this long symphony only rarely sounds less than a well-integrated, through-composed work. The great opening *adagio*, and the third 'purgatorio' and fourth *scherzo* movements are particularly successful. The Bournemouth orchestra respond wholeheartedly to their young conductor and produce a strength and commitment which more than compensate for any ultimate deficiency in sheen and glossiness.

A 10th symphony which caused its composer less trouble was Shostakovich's. Indeed it could be argued that it is his most wholly successful and deeply felt symphonic work. How commendable therefore of CBS to have reissued the superb first recorded performance, made by Dimitri Mitropoulos and the New York Philharmonic in 1954, just a year after the 10th's Leningrad world première. Mitropoulos is unquestionably one of the most under-rated conductors of post-war years, nor has his reputation been helped by his comparatively early death at 64 in 1960. That he was a great symphonic maestro this magnificent performance amply demonstrates, that the New York Philharmonic were devoted to him can be heard in their playing here. This is a great performance which the rather wooden mono sound does little to diminish. The opening movement, surely one of the finest things Shostakovich ever wrote, is totally compelling in its concentration.

The young British cellist Robert Cohen was not even born when that Shostakovich recording was made. Still only 21, he makes his recording debut with a performance of Elgar's Cello concerto which, in its technical assurance and musical conviction, rivals another recording debut in the same work—Jacqueline Du Pré's over 15 years ago now. Cohen, the son of the distinguished violinist Raymond Cohen and his pianist wife Anthya Rael (I heard them together some years ago as a formidable piano trio), bids fair to become a leading exponent of his instrument, and his performance here makes me eager for the release of his recording of the Dvorak concerto and Tchaikovsky Rococo Variations later this year. He is admirably and sensitively accompanied by that fine Elgarian Norman Del Mar and the London Philharmonic Orchestra, and their performances on the other side of Elgar's rich 'In the South' overture and haunting Elegy for Strings are also deeply satisfying. At a mere £2.25 this Lambert & Butler Master Series recording is indeed a remarkable bargain.

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# LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

## THE CHURCHILLIANS

*The Churchillians.* John Colville. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £8.95.

No one outside Sir Winston Churchill's family can claim to have known him as well as Sir John Colville. His book on the Churchillians is of first class importance, though one has a suspicion that the Churchillian world is temporarily in eclipse. I would describe myself as having been at certain moments on the periphery of the periphery of the Churchillian circle.

Sir John informs us that a division between the Churchillians depended upon whether they were, or were not, persons with whom it was agreeable to dine. (Norman Brook in the first category, Edward Bridges in the second). Possibly through the influence of Sir John, I was elected to The Other Club, my fellow newcomer being Onassis, who has always seemed to me the least appetising of the Churchillian circle. As a very young man I received immense kindness and hospitality from the fellow-founder of The Other Club, F. E. Smith, later first Earl of Birkenhead. Of the many others mentioned here, I knew Professor Lindemann (Lord Cherwell) over a much longer period than Sir John and I suppose that I could say the same of Randolph, who took me to Chartwell before Sir John entered the picture. I have vivid memories of Lord Beaverbrook, Brendan Bracken and many others. I feel as well qualified as the next man to offer a general opinion.

But such a general opinion is hard to come by. Indeed it defeats Sir John. He rightly points out 'that a notable fact about Churchill's friends and associates is their variety. Few of them were bores, for he could not endure the solemn or the long-winded'. But in fact Brendan Bracken, though a wonderful talker at his best, could lapse into garrulity quite readily. 'Some', says Sir John, 'were megalomaniacs, some were exhibitionists, some were ambitious and many were just worthily striving to do their best. The majority, especially among his official and political friends, were men who held office honourably and to the best of their varying abilities, but who also had a sense of humour, a ready tongue and the gift of good companionship'.

By the time all that is said, one has diluted Churchillianism to the point where it ceases to distinguish itself from Baldwinism, Chamberlainism or Attleeism. One has lost sight of the extraordinary fact that his closest allies for most of the crucial years were Beaverbrook, Brendan Bracken and 'the Prof'. One a Canadian, one an Irishman representing himself as an Australian and the other an Alsatian with a peculiar dislike of Germany. They could all be not unfairly described as 'adventurers', though indomitably loyal to Britain. The loyalty to Churchill of Bracken and Lindemann was total, that of Beaverbrook much more ambivalent, though Churchill retained an affection for him and Lloyd George which could only be regarded as sentimental. Most of the others in the best sense were acolytes. Jock Colville himself served Chamberlain, Attlee and Churchill with equal fidelity, but it was Churchill he romanticised, as indeed the Churchillians romanticised their hero.

To me, as to millions of others in this country, Churchill will always remain the saviour of the nation. Birkenhead seems to be relegated to the footnotes of history, but Birkenhead possessed a far greater appeal to young men than

Churchill, if only because he loved remaining young and entering into every athletic contest.

This book rings true and no one else could have written it with half as much inside knowledge.

FRANK LONGFORD

## ALL ROUND ENGLISHMAN

*The Leo Amery Diaries.* Edited by John Barnes and David Nicholson. Introduction by Julian Amery. Volume One 1896-1929. Hutchinson. £27.50.

Both British and Irish politicians have been protesting or complaining that the Dublin meeting between Mrs. Thatcher and Mr. Haughey and the ensuing dialogue of bureaucrats excluded study of the constitutional future of Northern Ireland. The status of the province was, however, discussed on the sidelines of another and earlier 'summit', the Imperial Conference of 1926 in London; and Leo Amery described with detail not included by D. W. Harkness in his book, *The Restless Dominion,* how Lord Carson acquiesced in a plan for the reunification of Ireland. According to Amery, Kevin O'Higgins, soon to be murdered by republicans, agreed, for his part, to the merger of Northern Ireland and Irish Free State as the independent 'Kingdom of Ireland', flying not Tricolour but Harp and Crown, with someone like Lord Londonderry as Viceroy. Many in the Free State had resented it being treated as a junior Dominion when Ireland was as much a Mother Country of the Commonwealth as was Britain; and O'Higgins had sought a formula, then and earlier, adapted from the Dual Monarchy of Austria-Hungary, just *as Sinn Féin* had long stood for the restoration of the King, Lords and Commons of pre-Union Ireland.

This is one of hundreds of fascinating revelations from the Diaries of a scholar, soldier and statesman who, with the pertinacity of his rival, Churchill, inserted himself into many meetings and events of historical interest and importance. A First in Greats and Fellow of All Souls, he was attracted by the Fabians for a time—they were then as much for efficiency and Empire as Lord Milner—and later a war correspondent and a Unionist M.P. He was a 'back room boy' for British and Imperial War Cabinets and a Cabinet Minister.

Small and pugnacious and almost too articulate, he bubbled over with ideas and stratagems to extend and defend the Empire and save by protection and preferential arrangements with the Dominions and Colonies the faltering industries of Britain. He travelled indefatigably in pursuit of the aim with which his admired Joseph Chamberlain had inspired the workers of Birmingham, one of whose Members he was.

His concept of Commonwealth was directed against President Wilson's excessive zeal for self-determination. He was not yet the 'European' of the Congress of The Hague and of the Strasbourg Plan intended by the Council of Europe to link European and overseas economies.

Amery, however, came to know Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi who founded the Pan-European movement with the design of a union of nations to be formed 'if possible with England, if necessary without England, never against England'. Thus Europeans could withstand Russian expansion and American penetration.

Coudenhove-Kalergi, according to Amery's entry of the 4th November 1926, 'regards the combination of England, France and Germany as the pivot of

the world's peace'. Not until after another 'European civil war', the war he hoped through Pan-Europa to avert, was the vision realised. Amery played an important part in the post-war European movement. That and his attempt to relate through the Strasbourg Plan European with overseas areas of preferential trade and investment belong to a later volume than this.

The chapter headed 'At odds with colleagues 1928-9' brings out Amery's ideological differences with the Winston Churchill whom as a boy he had pushed into the Harrow School swimming bath. Churchill's Imperialism was less practical than Amery's; the former was a Free Trader which, in Amery's estimation, made him a 'Little Englander'. The young Winston had fallen under the spell of India under the Raj. Unlike Amery, he did not look forward to *Swaraj*. In the succeeding decade they would be at odds over the India Bill which split the Conservative Party under Baldwin. On the 7th March, 1923, Amery defended in Bonar Law's Cabinet 'the case for giving modern artillery to the Indian native states'. He received little support.

Less gossipy and less copious than the Crossman Diaries, these display the more creative mind. Messrs. Barnes and Nicholson, both distinguished in the service of the Conservative Party, have marshalled them superbly. Such slips as the annotation describing Shapurji Saklatvala, the first Communist Party P.M., as Labour M.P. for Battersea North, are few and unimportant. The co-editors have produced a valuable source book which will be read with ease and pleasure by generations of those interested in the politics and history of modern Britain and the Commonwealth.

JOHN BIGGS-DAVISON, M.P

## PAUL ROSE, BACKBENCHER

*Backbencher's Dilema.* Paul Rose. Muller. £8.95.

Paul Rose was elected Labour MP for Blackley in Lancashire in the General Election of 1964, when he was 29. He had been born in the faith, and educated at a red-brick University which is the way he describes Manchester (which Conservative Minister Mark Carlisle also attended); he was a barrister-at-law of Gray's Inn and employed in the legal division of the Cooperative Society when he became an MP, and thus he brought talent and training to the House. He appeared marked for success, served as PPS to Mrs. Castle and in 1970 was chosen to join her frontbench team to oppose Mr. Heath's Industrial Relations Bill, a task he performed all too well. Along with Roy Jenkins and 67 other Labour MPs he voted in favour of accepting the terms of entry into the EEC negotiated by Mr. Heath's Government in 1971, and he (and six other PPSs) were sacked. He never held office or shadow office again, and in 1979, he decided not to stand again. He is now a full-time barrister, and—occasionally—a very welcome contributor to this journal.

The tone of his book, which is mainly an autobiographical *causerie,* and admittedly discursive, is indicated by chaper-titles like 'The Fringe, The Fight, The Frustration', and 'Enough is Enough'. There is evident dissatisfaction with the role of backbencher to which he saw himself condemned, and there is the implicit assumption that he was so condemned (if condemnation it is) because of his independence of mind, integrity and clear European-ness. This is a matter of argument. Clearly there were a number of very able Socialists who did not get preferment in the Wilson and Callaghan years: David Marquand, Brian Walden, the late John Mackintosh, Michael Barnes, to name a few; and they—for the most part—looked elsewhere for their hunting grounds. Clearly there were others, just as able, like Leo Abse and Andrew

Faulds, who seem positively to enjoy and use the freedom of the backbenches. Clearly there were others whose pro-European views did not hurt them at all (Bill Rodgers and Dickson Mabon to name two more). Is Mr. Rose right therefore, to see his obvious courage as the reason for his demotion? In fact, had he not been in a number of revolts (east of Suez, and Rhodesia?) before, and did he not stand conspicuously on the left of a party (on Rhodesia, Biafra, Vietnam and the Middle East) whose leader's primary task—before all else, from Gaitskell to Foot—was to hold it together? He tells us here of his noble but dangerous efforts to help the cause of human rights in the Greece of the Colonels, a task that might not have endeared him to any Prime Minister. Indeed, I have to confess that my principal recollection of Mr. Rose, in my own short-lived presence at Westminster—was as a sponsor of Bernadette Devlin, whose maiden speech was vehemently Trotskyist; and he admits his long-term involvement in the quest for a solution of Northern Irish affairs He was, and is, able and independent-minded, radical-oriented and uncompliant. But he was not alone in that. And in the end, in the British system, it is party and party-unity that get things done. A collection of 630 Paul Roses, even he would admit, would be a stimulating prospect, but how much governing would it do?

I write this in no carping spirit. Paul Rose has given us here a vivid and disturbingly accurate portrayal of an MP's life. He is especially good on relations with the constituency, on surgeries and housing estates, on garden fetes and all that, on what he calls 'the messy working conditions and the hectic travelling.' It is familiar stuff to those who have been 'baptised,' but it is told here again with freshness and feeling. If it is any balm to his soul, I can only say that Manchester is a lot nearer to London than Glasgow, his seat was safer than mine, he did not have Scot Nats to worry about, and Rangers and Celtic and their supporters bring an even greater *brio* to life and politics than Manchester United and Manchester City! He was luckier than perhaps he recognises in his seat and circumstances.

It is unfortunately only in his last pages that Paul Rose deals with contemporary matters and the 'stultifying left-right squabble.' In a sense his book is a continuing commentary on this squabble, and it becomes clear in every page how much a compromiser any Labour leader must be. Mr. Rose holds out hope of electoral reform even if, in all his admiration of Roy Jenkins, the new party 'unhappily sounds more centre than radical.' He is refreshing and outspoken on the cults, and the threats they pose to family life and personal freedom. He is optimistic on the new committee system, and constructive on what even a backbencher can do to exploit his role in the House of Commons. He is much too simple (or maybe he does not see this fragment of autobiography as the place?) in seeing the adversary system and the party whips as the primary threat to democracy. I would put bureaucracy and the Unions far ahead in the queue, not to mention Communism abroad and—deviously—at home. Nor do I agree with him that it is (p. 127) 'the ordinary people who, in the last analysis, make history.' Maybe it ought to be so, in some Utopia, but it never has been so, and never will be. History is made by the activists, and by the individualists, in fact by people like Paul Rose. Indeed, at age 46, it is by no means too late. He is nibbling again. 'It is a pity that MPs cannot take a sabbatical year' (p 193). 'There are new circumstances which could once again bring me back into the battle.' (p. 194) Mr. Foot will take note of that overtone. Or is it a threat?

ESMOND WRIGHT

## THERAPEUTIC IMMUNOLOGY

*New Life for Old, Therapeutic Immunology.* David Abbott. Frederick Muller Ltd., London. £8.95.

When I was a medical student in the 1940s immunology occupied a miniscule portion of the curriculum. There was a fleeting mention of it in the course on bacteriology and just the hint in clinical medicine that some diseases, the causation of which was highly obscure, might have an immunological component.

Now the situation has changed out of all recognition! Immunology pervades virtually all medical specialities; scientific reputations are won or lost on its account; many Nobel Prize Laureates hold this most prestigious of awards for their expertise in and contributions to this area.

This readable little book is basically an exercise in preventive medicine with immunology as its centrepiece. Dr. Abbott, in my opinion rightly, takes the view that far too much funding and kudos centres around the cure of disease and not nearly enough on serious and strenuous attempts to prevent it. Coronary heart disease and cancer are of course, the archetypal examples of the 'curative' approach, treatment being applied at a totally wrong time in the historical evolution of the diseases, the analogy being that of the horse which having seen the stable door bolted behind him has been grazing in the paddock for many decades.

*New Life for Old* concerns itself with the very fundamentals of existence—with the body cells themselves in which all the mechanisms for coping with disease are stored. The first chapter describes the great variety of cell types which exist and the composition of their components including the nucleus, the mitochondria ('power houses' with a strong inherent dynamic providing the cell with its energy) and the multifarious biochemical processes, many of them are of a highly complex and technical nature, necessary to maintain cellular function.

Bodily defence through cells is the next theme. Here the author describes the standard antigen-antibody clash, the roles of deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) and ribonucleic acid (RNA), the series of events which takes place when a virus attacks a cell and the progress which has been made in vaccination since the time of Jenner. Interferon, a substance produced by cells in order to combat disease, receives brief mention but wisely this emotive theme especially in relation to cancer treatment is played in rather low key.

Dr. Abbott becomes somewhat more passionate when he turns to the theme of therapeutic immunology (T.I.). He utters fulsome panegyrics to the founders of the speciality—Niehans in Switzerland and Ernest Stephen practicing in London and succeeded by his son Peter. In T.I. preparations of RNA and DNA are directly administered to patients: the medicaments are claimed to be 'organ specific' and an impressive list of case histories is provided at the end of the book in which miraculous cures or at least significant alleviation of symptoms of diseases as varied as asthma, arthritis, arteriosclerosis, colitis, fertility disorders, high blood pressure, deafness, obesity and prostatic enlargements are claimed.

The book is well written. The author has a good command of the language and avoids wearisome technical jargon in an area which it might have been considered justifiable to employ it. As with all treatises proselytising for 'miracle cures' and in particular for the avoidance of ageing and prolonging

the life span significantly this reviewer has been too long in the game to be over impressed. So often the arguments adduced are specious; so frequently they are swallowed up in the capacious maw of history. Although Dr. Abbott and his mentors may have discovered something truly revolutionary in T.I. the onus is on them to prove it and this book, although more convincing than some in this general field, is scarcely enough to convert a sceptical public.

JOHN A. LORAINE

## EVERYMAN'S VERSE

*Everyman's book of English Verse.* Edited by John Wain. J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd. £8.95.

Mr. Wain has pleasurably compiled an anthology which is original in design, and has a plain rightness about its entity. He begins with the Anglo-Saxons (in translation) and proceeds through the centuries to the present time, and in this way, in some 650 pages (for it is not a pinched or frugal volume) he achieves, without artificial divides, a magnificent conspectus of the English poetic achievement.

The duty of the anthologist is polymorphous: he must not disappoint expectations, he must enlighten those readers who have no expectations, and by the application of the touchstone of his own culture he must fashion a whole which is meaningful. Mr. Wain has amply fulfilled the first two requirements, and, for the third, in a somewhat free-ranging Introduction (as if his concept of Everyman has shifted unnervingly before him as he writes) he has directed his reader to the broad and traditional theme of poetry's movement with the forces that move the world—(Professor W. W. Robson's words). To this end, Mr. Wain has fused together a powerful mainstream of poetry which will often be read and appreciated in sequence, rather than sporadically.

Acknowledged masterpieces seem to shine forth with a new impact. Shakespeare is represented not only by a generous allotment of the sonnets, but also by passages from the plays. Here, in the nature of things, there will not be universal approbation: where, for instance, is Claudio on death? Not sufficiently life-enhancing? Gray's *Elegy* is not excluded, *pace* the late Professor Lytton Sells' recent demolition job on those sacred lines; but, as Mr. Wain elucidates in one of his diverting swoops from the general to the particular in his Introduction, the poem appears in its first known form, without the 'touches of pomposity and artificiality' of the longer, more familiar version. Similarly, Mr. Wain has chosen the first, more archaic version of *The Ancient Mariner.* Spenser, Milton, Dryden and Pope are not stinted. Wordsworth is treated rather oddly, with, for example, nothing of *'Tintern Abbey'.* Prufrock wears well and more than holds his own in the later pages of the anthology.

Poets better appreciated in retrospect, such as the Metaphysicals, Hopkins, Hardy, and Charlotte Mew, are beautifully selected. The modern poets included are of the type described in Wain's *Essays on Literature and Ideas* as the 'classical modern poet (who) writes short poems into which he seeks to compress the whole of his experience—intellectual, physical, emotional.' This, obviously, is the zone in which Mr. Wain is the most exposed to querulous carping. The Macspaunday animal, for example, is represented only by Auden and MacNeice.

There is, throughout, a leavening of less recognisable verse, and this is a subjective area. There must have been sacrifices to allow the inclusion of,

say, Ebenezer Elliott or Digby Mackworth Dolben. Meredith and Swinburne get a short crack of the whip: only Symons' *White Heliotrope* represents the Decadence. And so one may debate enjoyably. Poetry matters deeply to Mr. Wain—'It can rescue us from dailiness and show us the miracle of existence through washed eyes'—and his anthology is to be valued.

MOLLY TIBBS

## SHORTER REVIEWS

**Colne Valley; Radicalism to Socialism.** (Longman. £12). This 'portrait of a Northern constituency in the formative years of the Labour Party 1890-1910' comes very appropriately from Mr. David Clark, being a former M.P. for Colne Valley, 1970-74 and a student of the early history of the Labour movement. He is now Labour M.P. for South Shields. The Colne Valley Parliamentary Division in the West Riding of Yorkshire was created in 1885. The Liberals won the first election in 1885 by a moderate majority from the Conservatives. In July 1891, the local Labour Party, or Labour Union, was formed. In this valuable study, Mr. Clark traces the growth and political development of the Colne Valley Labour Party and its relations with the Independent Labour Party and trade unions on a national level. Like most other local Labour parties in the early days, it did not start as a socialist organisation. It was basically radical but disillusioned by the Liberal employers who were so often against the working class. Mr. Clark refers to Ramsay MacDonald's argument that the I.L.P. emerged from the desire among Liberals for Labour representation and that it later attached itself to socialism. In Colne Valley this development took place. Mr. Clark places great emphasis upon the Labour Clubs in formulating and spreading political doctrine. In 1893 Tom Mann became the prospective Parliamentary candidate, but lost to the Liberals at the 1895 election. In the period 1896-1906, the Colne Valley Labour Union and Labour League 'had an impressive overall performance in local government elections'. The author makes the point that where the Liberals met the demand for Labour representation within the Liberal organisation, the chances of Labour Party success were diminished. At Colne Valley the climax came at the By-Election in 1907, following the elevation to the peerage of the Liberal member. The Labour Candidate, young Victor Grayson a former theological student, fought a brilliant campaign based on socialism. A superb orator he caught the imagination and enthusiastic support of the radical working class even though not endorsed by the national party or the trade unions whom he greatly suspected as being too inward looking. He won the election; but he was too controversial, independent and dogmatic to survive for long. After losing the seat at the first 1910 General Election, he disappeared from public life. Mr. Clark has done a great deal of local research which gives to this study particular weight and importance.

**Modern Spain 1875-1980** (Oxford University Press. £7.50: paperback £3.95). So little is known among the general public of the history of Spain that this volume by Raymond Carr in the Opus Series will be widely

welcomed. He compresses with great skill and judgment in less than two hundred pages a comprehensive survey of the last hundred years giving particular attention to the period 1875-1930. 'The fundamental problem of Spain in this period was a political problem: the search for a political system which could enjoy legitimacy, that long term, generalised acceptance which provides stable governments—other than those maintained by force.' The Second Republic failed but Raymond Carr argues that at length Spain has achieved a well supported and effective legitimate democracy and pays tribute to King Juan Carlos for his part. He writes that there is 'no immediate prospect of a massive and effective right-wing reaction backed by the army'. This was written well before the recent attempted coup by sections of the army. There was no right wing reaction of any effect. 'A return to Francoism as such is, politically inconceivable'. The book has a most useful bibliography.

**The Art of War** (Jonathan Cape. £15.00). This is a superbly produced volume of coffee table size devoted to the phenomenon of war in all its attributes from the earliest times until today. It is utterly repugnant, yet calling forth some of man's great qualities. John Keegan discusses the course of war and violent struggle in its many aspects. 'The depiction of the warrior and his world is an important, even if neglected, element of the artistic vision'. As part of 'this artistic vision', Joseph Darracott has assembled nearly 250 illustrations, half in colour, and including many reproductions of well-known masterpieces. This is the most attractive part of the work.

**The Collected Stories of Elizabeth Bowen** (Jonathan Cape. £8.50). This volume contains all Elizabeth Bowen's short stories, starting in 1923 until 1956. There are 79 in over 750 pages. In his Introduction, Angus Wilson refers to her natural artistic power and concludes: 'the instinctive artist is there at very heart of her work and gives a strength, a fierceness and a depth to her elaborations, her delight in words, her determination that life seen will only survive on the page when it has met the strictest demands of form and elegance'. He gives particular weight to her stories concerning children as 'totally satisfying' and also to her wartime stories. London in the blitz was 'an extraordinary revelation of English behaviour and feeling', and 'there will be only two English writers who convey what life in blitzed London was like—Elizabeth Bowen and Henry Green'. There is no doubt that Elizabeth Bowen was an important writer of fiction, and this collection of her short stories will be widely welcomed.

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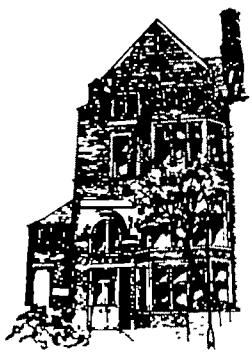

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Paul Wilkinson

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# Contemporary Review

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## AFTER TEHRAN

### by Paul Wilkinson

THE profession of diplomat must now rank as one of the most dangerous in the world. Ambassadors and other diplomatic and consular officials have become increasingly popular targets for terrorist attack. Some have been shot down in cold blood in the streets of Western capitals. Many have been held hostage. Often members of their families have been victims of attack. Embassy and consular buildings have been bombed, set on fire, and subjected to attack by riotous mobs.

One would need to search back to 16th century Europe to find an age when the lifestyle of ambassadors was comparably insecure. In those days they were not, as a rule, paid regular salaries by the governments they served. Yet as the personal representatives of their sovereigns they were expected to entertain on a grand scale to maintain status, often bankrupting themselves in the process. Worse still, as there was no recognised system of diplomatic precedence, they were expected to fight for their places at official occasions, and they frequently became involved in duels. Yet even those discomforts pale in comparison with the threats faced by any present-day Western diplomat stationed in a region like Central America or the Middle East.

This increasingly physical danger comes at a time when diplomacy's *raison d'être,* aptly defined by Sir Ernest Satow as 'the conduct of business between states by peaceful means', is more important than ever. For while it is true that the prestige and influence of the resident ambassador and his mission has declined from its apogee in 19th century Europe, professional diplomats still play a vital part in helping to lubricate and improve relations between governments.

They devote patient effort to getting to know the Ministers, officials and opinion leaders of other states, and their fellow diplomats. Because they are on the spot they can be far more effective at assessing situations and trends. A sagacious and well-informed ambassador may still play an influential role in shaping his own government's policy and in preparing the way for the negotiations of agreements. As a cultural representative and spokesman, he may help to increase mutual understanding between peoples. Another very important task nowadays is that of enhancing trade, and economic and technical co-operation. It is true that increasingly this kind of work is also handled through international conferences

and by direct contacts between governments. But the ambassador's role has certainly not been superseded, and it is worth noting that the more opposed governments become in ideology or interests, the more the burden of communication tends to devolve on the man on the spot.

The complex system of modern diplomacy rests on the universal (or near universal) acceptance by the international society of states of the fundamental principle of diplomatic reciprocity. Simply, it is that the host states grant the immunity of diplomatic missions from constraint and take responsibility for protecting missions from molestation, while the sending states accept the rule that their diplomats must not interfere in the internal affairs of the host country. Undoubtedly one of the major reasons why the modern system of diplomatic representation is under such strain is that many governments and political groups now believe that some states are not observing the rule of non-interference in internal affairs. It is foolish to deny that, since the Cold War, traditional forms of diplomatic behaviour have been increasingly undermined. There are innumerable well-substantiated cases of diplomatic missions being used as cover for subversion, terrorism and intervention, and of receiving states 'bugging' embassies and harassing them in various ways. In certain countries, and among certain political groups, the diplomatic representatives of major powers tend to be seen at best as mischief-makers, at worst as enemy spies and saboteurs. Thus, even if one did not take into account the recent spate of physical attacks on diplomats, one would have to admit that the institution of diplomatic representation is under severe strain and in urgent need of review by the international community.

The present system, embodied in the 1961 Vienna Convention, is all we have. In any case it is notoriously difficult to get any consensus on changes in international law. It would be still more problematic in the anarchic international relations of the 1980s. Whatever reforms may be introduced, it is hard to see how any diplomatic representation can be viable unless it meets two basic conditions: first, there must be some guaranteed minimum of security against attack for the persons and pro perty of diplomatic missions; and, secondly, there must be genuine reciprocity, i.e. both sending and receiving states must honour their obligations. It is precisely because of the current grave threats on both these counts that it is hardly exaggerating to say that the whole system of diplomatic representation is under siege. Let me now briefly consider the nature of both types of threat, and how the international community might counter them.

The main threats to the safety of diplomats arise from the growth of terrorism. Extremist groups discovered that kidnapping diplomats was one effective means of winning tactical objectives, such as the release of prisoners from jail, large ransoms and enormous publicity. Success and boldness resulted in higher demands. The most popular targets for international terrorist attack have been American business executives, diplomats and property. Neo-Marxist terrorist groups see them as 'legitimate' targets for 'revolutionary justice', because America is viewed as the

leading 'capitalist-imperialist power'. In regions like Latin America and the Middle East, terrorists know that there is a reservoir of anti-Americanism and that by hitting unpopular foreigners they are less likely to antagonise the population.

Western diplomats make easy targets. By its very nature, diplomacy involves considerable travel, mingling with the local population, socialising and being accessible. What is the good of having an ambassador who has to be incarcerated in concrete pillbox, under constant, heavily armed guard? Foreign accents and appearance makes them easily identifiable. And even the wealthiest states cannot afford elaborate, round-the-clock security for all their diplomats. Any determined and carefully planned terrorist attack has a good chance of succeeding. Furthermore, the increasing internationalisation of terrorism means that the more highly organised groups will strike in the heart of the Western metropolis or in third countries, whatever opportunity arises, sometimes in collaboration with sister organisations abroad. No government can be sure where the next point of attack will be.

The new scourge is the seizure of embassies and their staffs and occupants. This is a fairly easy operation for terrorists in countries where the security forces cannot protect missions adequately. In the resulting mass hostage situations the terrorists have many advantages which they exploit to the hilt to wrench large concessions from the local regime. At the same time, the government and security forces, provided they are not colluding with the terrorists, have one key advantage in a siege: the terrorists are themselves hostages, and part of the deal they seek will be a safe exit. This can be used as a powerful lever in police siege tactics.

When about four hundred Iranian students stormed the United States embassy in Tehran on November 4th, 1979, and seized 100 hostages, including 62 United States citizens, the Iranian regime totally failed to carry out its obligations under international law. The Islamic revolutionary authorities made no attempt to assist the United States diplomatic mission party. They provided no police or military protection for United States personnel or property. And instead of carrying out their obligations under the Vienna Convention (1961), to protect diplomatic missions, they made no attempt to return the embassy to United States control by expelling the insurgents. On the contrary, they compounded their offences against international law of diplomacy by 'adopting' the siege as their own, and by not only giving it the official blessing of the Khomeini but also by manipulating the hostage crisis to inflict maximum international embarrassment and humiliation on the United States. This was the first time in recent history that any state had so flagrantly defied the norms and conventions of diplomatic relations. It is true that other regimes have been heavily involved in the sponsorship of international terrorists. States such as the Soviet Union, Libya, Syria and Iraq have long regarded this as an attractive weapon to weaken adversary states on an opportunistic basis. In the case of the Entebbe hijack, the Ugandan dictator, Amin, openly connived with the PFLP hijackers. But in recent

times, no regime had seen fit to sanction the abduction of a whole diplo matic mission.

The second remarkable feature of the Tehran hostage crisis was the fact that the United States, by a narrow margin still the greatest single military power, proved either unable or unwilling to use its massive military powers to compel the Iranians to release their diplomats. No other single incident in international relations since 1945 has so vividly demonstrated the crippling limitations of a superpower unable to risk using its giant's strength against a defiant and self-righteous minor power. The humiliation and vilification of the U.S.A. by Iran was all the more shocking and psychologically intolerable to the American public because until the demise of the Shah the United States had been the dominant external influence on Iran. Billions of dollars of United States investment had been poured into the development of the Iranian oil industry and the Shah's ambitious 'White Revolution' modernisation programme, and the build up of Iran's military power as a vital ally in South West Asia. The American public had barely had time to come to terms with the toppling of the Shah. To most ordinary Americans, the hatred and abuse hurled at them by the screaming mobs paraded before their embassy in Tehran seemed quite incomprehensible. The feeling of helpless ness and frustration provoked by these scenes, displayed on United States television screens, week after week, undoubtedly did much to undermine the domestic support and credibility of the Carter Administration, and the reaction against it, inevitably, helped Reagan, with his more hard nosed and assertive stance, to win his overwhelming election victory. Nor should we underestimate the extent to which America's credibility as an ally was undermined both by the events leading to the Shah's fall and by the hostage crisis. Arab states, and particularly Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states looked uneasily around for other forms of security and greater regional self-help: The West-Europeans began to recite old doubts and fears about America's 'reliability' and 'failures of leadership'.

The West European reaction only added to America's feelings of frustration and desertion. For the unpalatable fact is that America's NATO allies did almost nothing tangible to assist the US in the hostage crisis. Reluctantly and late in the day it is true that the EEC foreign ministers did agree to impose trade sanctions on Iran. But these modest measures were undermined by a revolt of backbenchers in the British Parliament who insisted on blocking the plan to involve retrospective economic sanctions. None of the EEC countries acted to freeze Iranian assets held in European banks. Not one state broke off diplomatic relations with Iran in protest at the hostage-taking. Iranian diplomats continued to enjoy all normal privileges and immunities in every West European state. Some of America's allies it must be admitted, actually sought to capitalise on the Iranian crisis by doing private deals with Iran to fill gaps left by the American boycott: France, Britain, West Germany, and Japan were all guilty of this economic opportunism. Once again commercial greed and fear of adverse consequences to future oil supplies

seem to have been placed above principles of international law in the conduct of European foreign policy. Of course it is true that one can find a rationale for the EEC attitudes. Some argued that there was a real danger of Iran being pushed into alliance with the Soviets, and that this made it politic to soft-pedal pressure on Iran. But surely, in view of the bitter anti-communism evinced by the Khomeini and the *ulema* generally, and the chastening effect of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan on the Islamic world, this fear was exaggerated. Others argue that the EEC states were being helpful to the U.S. by keeping their embassies open, as this provided channels of information and communication to be maintained. This sounds reasonable enough until one recalls the gravity of Iran's offence against international law, the fact that innocent British citizens in Iran were also being imprisoned without trial, and that other diplomatic missions were constantly in danger of occupation, on the model of the U.S. embassy takeover. To the Iranians the EEC states' behaviour must have appeared not only weak, but implicitly turning a blind eye to the abduction of U.S. diplomats. In any case the key ultimate negotiations for the hostages' release were *not* conducted through diplomatic missions in Tehran, but in a third country, Algeria, thousands of miles away from Iran. Resolute action by the Western European NATO allies would not have in any way precluded or prevented U.S.-Iranian negotiations.

It is easy enough to criticise the Carter Administration's own response to the crisis. At times they seemed almost mesmerized by the propaganda of humiliation and abuse heaped upon them from Tehran. When they were not actually paralyzed by their own indecision about what to do, for example over the fate of the Shah, they often appeared to be merely reacting to the propaganda ploys and initiatives of the fundamentalists in Tehran. The President and his advisers did not seem to have listened properly to the expert advice they were getting from their own team in Iran before the takeover, including the clear warnings that a takeover was imminent, or to the best advice available in the U.S. and in allied countries on the special problems of response to international terrorism. Too many general administrators and senior U.S. politicians apparently *thought* they understood what was going on and how to cope with it: in fact they were not dealing with a totally unprecedented problem. The *scale* of the abduction was new, but the State Department had built up a rich fund of knowledge, indeed almost unrivalled experience in coping with the protection of diplomats and diplomatic premises and the problems of hostage negotiation and rescue. Yet some of the 'old hands' with intimate practical knowledge were not even peremptorily consulted. Three of America's closest allies—West Germany, France, and Israel—had very recent experience of successful long-range rescue operations in terrorist situations: yet none of the lessons learnt in these cases was taken into account by the U.S. planners.

It is painful but necessary to spell out some lessons of the abortive U.S. rescue attempt of April, 1980. Some, though by no means all, of these

lessons are implicit in the findings of the official Government inquiry into the failure of the mission. First there is the vital matter of the decision concerning the feasibility and timing of the rescue attempt. Arguably the U.S. Administration should have moved far more swiftly, in the very early days of the hostage-taking, if the rescue was to have any chance of success. A surprise assault at that stage would have caught the Iranians far less prepared: the Islamic fundamentalists had not had time to reorganise and deploy the Iranian armed forces, they were still establishing their hold over the country, and in the climate of general chaos a really powerful airborne assault might have had some chance of success. Of course it is true that the U.S. did not have a powerful military or naval presence, at that stage, in the Gulf area. But arrangements could have been made rapidly and easily with one of their traditional allies within easy striking distance of Iran, to use their airfields to launch the assault. Turkey or Israel would have seemed obvious candidates. Once this opportunity for a rapid response operation was lost there is a strong case for saying that the military option had become impracticable, dangerous, and hence potentially, politically and strategically counter-productive long before the actual April attempt.

Even supposing that these arguments could have been overcome, the operational planning proved an unmitigated disaster. The whole concept of using an improvised multi-service unit should have been discarded at the outset. Inter-service rivalries and suspicions are always a threat to such operations. It was essential to use a unit-in-being with established experience and the highest quality training in the airborne rescue mission role. The April 1980 operation was disastrously weak in terms of aircraft and firepower, so that even if they had made it to their target it is highly unlikely that they would have survived opposition from the Iranian airforce, artillery and rockets. Again, it is almost incredible that there were not enough helicopters in reserve to make good the losses caused by the fatal collision. Perhaps the most striking deficiencies that emerged were those of command and control. The President and his staff appear to have had the ability to inhibit the scope and firepower of the operation, yet do not seem to have either been made aware by their top military advisers of the grave risks and problems of such an operation, or to have been in a position to control it and restore the situation once things had begun to go wrong. Contrast President Kennedy's crisis management of the U.S. naval blockade in the Cuban missile crisis, 1962. Relevant experience of America's allies on the problems and requirements for a successful long-range hostage rescue operation, for example the experience of Israel at Entebbe and the FRG at Mogadishu, does not appear to have in any way informed the U.S. military planners. In sum one must conclude that the failure of the U.S. rescue mission in April was *not* primarily due to deficiencies of military technology or equipment failure, as so widely assumed: it was mainly due to inadequate strategy, failures of military planning, and deficiencies in organisation, command and control. It is an appalling commentary on the failure of the top U.S. military and

civilian officials to acquire the special knowledge and skills required to handle the tasks of countering international terrorism and other forms of low-level conflict. It confirms the judgement formed by experienced observers of this kind of unconventional conflict during the U.S. involvement in Vietnam: the U.S., despite its huge armoury of nuclear and conventional hardware, has not yet mastered the arts of contending with terrorism and unconventional conflict.

At the end of the day the diplomats and foreign affairs experts in the State Department came out of the business with far less damage to their credibility. Secretary of State Cyrus Vance immediately set about diplomatic initiatives, at the UN, through the European NATO allies, and through friendly Moslem states, to bring pressure to bear on the Iranian authorities, and to concert international condemnation and isolation of Iran for its grave offence against international law. This diplomatic effort helped considerably in offsetting the propaganda tirade from Tehran which was attempting to extract maximum U.S. humiliation from the crisis.

Astonishingly, it appears that Mr. Vance did not participate in the crucial decision to send in a military rescue force. Had he been properly consulted it is clear that he would have advised strongly against launching such an operation at that stage. In the event he had no option but to resign his post. His departure from office in this manner, almost unprecedented in recent American politics, must be taken as striking evidence of the failure of co-ordination and communication within the U.S. Administration at the height of the crisis.[1]

Mr. Warren Christopher, the Deputy Secretary of State intimately involved in the negotiations for the release of the hostages through the good offices of Algeria, has perhaps not been accorded sufficient credit for the way he patiently worked to overcome the previous disasters, to achieve terms for the release of the hostages which are in themselves something of a *tour de force.* The U.S. did not, after all, pay ransom money to Iran. All the funds that the Iranians have recovered have been assets that were frozen by the U.S. Iran has not been able to make good the losses she incurred as a result of the economic sanctions exerted by the U.S. and other Western states. Moreover, the fact that the hostages' ultimate release brought to light the prolonged terrorisation and mental torture of the hostages and their captors did much to offset the earlier psychological damage suffered by the U.S. The testimony of the hostages relayed on the world media only served to confirm the growing international impression that the regime of the mullahs in Iran was not merely obscurantist and anti-Western, but also that it had committed barbarities against the innocent. The ultimate release of the hostages on the day of President Reagan's inauguration was in a way a victory for patient diplomacy, and one for which President Carter himself, for all his earlier mistakes, must take considerable credit.

Even so it must be admitted that the moral and political costs of the hostage crisis are huge. There is the extensive damage to U.S. credibility

both in terms of domestic and international opinion, and the undermining of the U.S. strategic position *vis-à-vis* S.W. Asia and the Gulf. Also very serious is the encouragement given to other 'rogue' states to engage in or support acts of international terrorism against an adversary. More specifically, the abduction of the U.S. diplomats by Iran is likely to inspire similar acts by other states, however tinpot their defences and however crack-pot their policies, as a means of giving vent to their rage and hatred against Western countries. The United States is likely to continue to be a particularly favoured target, though the United Kingdom, France and West Germany are also, for various reasons, highly vulnerable.

Moreover, the Iranian case sets an unfortunate precedent at a time when international law of diplomacy is being increasingly violated. In 1979 alone a record total of 26 embassies and consulates around the world were occupied, and a further dozen were occupied in the first two months of 1980. Diplomatic terrorism appears to become just as contagious as aircraft hijacking was between 1969 and 1972.

The U.S. experience in Iran should greatly increase the urgency with which conscientious governments tighten up on their responsibilities of diplomatic protection, both in their roles as host and sending states. This involves improved intelligence and security co-operation between host and sending states, better resources, manpower and training for diplomatic protection personnel,[2] and a stricter adherence to the obligations of the Vienna Treaty on Diplomatic Relations (1961). Indeed there is a strong case for reconvening the Vienna conference with a view to strengthening the safeguards of the diplomatic community, and giving some better provisions for proper enforcement of the Vienna agreement.

However, none of these improvements in diplomatic security really assist in a case such as the Tehran hostage-taking, where a whole regime connives at an act of diplomatic terrorism. Where a state chooses to defy the norms and conventions recognised by the bulk of the international community much stronger weapons are clearly required by the latter to compel compliance.

Firstly, there is the need to develop and refine the military option. At the end of the day it may be decided that it would be wiser not to employ military intervention to mount a rescue operation, especially if the delinquent state is both fanatically ruthless and heavily armed. The resulting loss of innocent life and the danger of triggering a major war may rule out the possibility of a military rescue force option. On the other hand, there may be occasions, as exemplified at Entebbe, when a military option is both feasible and desirable. For this purpose governments should be closely reviewing their contingency plans and improving the professionalism and training of their own elite rescue units. And in those regions of the world, such as the Gulf or Central and South America, where many smaller states do not have an elite military unit capable of this task, it is clearly an urgent necessity for regional organisations and groupings of states to establish units to carry out specialised hostage

rescue on behalf of any member state where it is required. An alternative umbrella would be the United Nations: certain appropriate forces for hostage rescue could be earmarked by the UN for use on a regional basis. By agreement, the regional grouping could adopt arrangements to mobilize rescue operations even in the rare case of a state collaborating with the terrorists. As the UN Charter certainly envisaged peace enforcement, difficult though this may be to achieve in practice, surely one can envisage a more modest type of enforcement mechanism for the rescue of the innocent?

At the same time, while facing the realities of contemporary international relations, we must recognise that even a major power may baulk at the wider risks of using the military option for hostage rescue, and where states fear to tread, the regional organisations and the UN may also be unwilling to act. Is there then no other sanction open to an aggrieved state where a delinquent regime commits an act of international terrorism against its diplomats, businessmen or ordinary citizens? Should we not consider some form of international sanction more powerful than expelling individual diplomats or breaking diplomatic relations, yet less risky than engaging in military action? One possibility that might be considered is to establish new forms of international retortions, i.e. international legal reprisals against the delinquent state. These might take the form of strong economic sanctions, though the record shows that these do not really bite unless they are applied by the entire international community. More realistically the international community could agree to amend the code of diplomatic practice in the following way: in the event of a regime abducting a diplomatic mission, or in any other way seriously violating the immunities of foreign diplomatic personnel, the diplomats of the delinquent state posted in the state which they have victimized shall immediately forfeit their immunities and privi leges and be liable for imprisonment until such time as the rights and immunities of the victimized state are restored. We may need exceptional international retortions of this kind if we are to prevent a re-occurrence of Tehran-style abduction. It was patently unjust that Iranian diplomats in Washington were able to enjoy their full privileges while the Ameri cans in Tehran were being so foully mistreated, and that the U.S. authorities should have then allowed the Iranians to return home unhindered, when the formal breach of diplomatic relations occurred. The normal laws and rights covering the treatment of diplomats had surely been forfeited by Iran, and hence forceful diplomatic reprisals were more than justified. Of course, the Iranian mullahs would not have cared tuppence for the fate of their own diplomats. Nevertheless the symbolic and psychological value of strong action by the U.S. would have been invaluable in signalling that Iran's behaviour had gone beyond civilised bounds, and in bringing home to Iran and any would-be delinquent states that the abduction of diplomats was not cost free. This is what deterrence is all about.

The Iranian experience shows that where diplomatic security and low-

level violence are concerned we must learn to think in terms of more imaginative and psychologically dramatic and effective responses. Our very predictability and conformity to hidebound traditional responses almost certainly increases our vulnerability to international muggers.

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It now transpires that the British, French, West German and Swedish embassies in Tehran all refused to shelter six U.S. embassy staff who escaped capture when the U.S. embassy was attacked. With allies like these who needs enemies? Canada alone acted with courage and integrity in sheltering and facilitating the escape of U.S. personnel.

1 President Reagan's decision to appoint the Vice President, Mr. Bush, as head of a special crisis-management team may perhaps be seen as an effort to overcome the endemic problems of interdepartmental co-ordination in U.S. crisis management. It appears that the Secretary of State is very unhappy with this arrangement, and this does not bode well.

2 For further discussion of possible practical steps on diplomatic protection see Paul Wilkinson, 'Diplomatic Relations?', *Police Review*, Vol. 88 September 19th, 1980, pp 1921-3.

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[Paul Wilkinson is Professor of International Relations at the University of Aberdeen. He is Editor of *British Perspectives on Terrorism*, which will be published by Allen and Unwin during the summer of 1981.]

The July issue of *Contemporary Review* includes *Towards a Definition of Islamic Economic Theory* by Masudul Alam Choudhury, *Terrorism, the Mass Media and Democracy* by Paul Wilkinson, *The Story of the World Worldlife Fund* by Sir Arthur Norman and *'The Last Man in Europe': A Comment on George Orwell's 1984* by John Barnsley (held over from the May issue).

# THE ELECTIONS AND THE ECONOMY—WHITHER WEST GERMANY?

## by David Southern

EVER since the state was founded in 1949 there has been a broad measure of agreement in West Germany about how politics should be conducted and how the economy should be managed. The federal election of October 1980 has reaffirmed the political consensus but the economic consensus has come under increasing strain.

The importance of elections is greatly exaggerated. They embody political choices which are ordinarily of marginal significance. In Britain it is still the case that—present modifications of the party system notwithstanding—the elected government enjoys for its term of office a monopoly of political power. It is therefore in a position to implement policies without the support of and if necessary against the other parties. For better or worse, the British system has enabled Mrs. Thatcher's government to display an imperious attitude to dissent within and outside Parliament. In a country with a party list system of proportional representation—like West Germany—it is difficult for one party to secure an absolute majority. The federal system ensures that those parties in opposition in Bonn will form the government in some of the federal states *(Laender)*. The state governments are represented in the legislative process by the second chamber of Parliament, the Bundesrat, which on important legislation has equal powers with the elected first chamber, the Bundestag. A written constitution imposes substantial limitations on the freedom of decision of all political actors. In the West German system it therefore avails the Federal Government nought to act like the centurion in the Bible, saying to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Do this, and he doeth it. The exercise of the powers of West German governments is circumscribed by the rules of the constitution and dependent upon the co-operation of the other political parties. This situation is not altered by elections. West German elections are therefore not as important as British general elections.

West German elections do record shifts in the relative balance of party strength. Since 1969 the Federal Government has been formed by a coalition of the Social Democratic Party (SPD) and Free Democratic Party (FDP). The Bundestag election of 5 October 1980 gave this coalition a further four-year term of office and strengthened the dominance of the centre at the expense of the extremes of right and left. West Germany has thus escaped the rightwards shift which has marked the politics of the United States and Great Britain.

The right in the election was represented by the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and Christian Social Union (CSU). Their contentious choice of the leader of the CSU, Franz Josef Strauss, as Chancellor-candidate, i.e. as prospective head of government, had threatened to dissolve the

consensus which sustains West German politics. The decisive rejection of Strauss has reduced him to the status of an ordinary man and ensured that he will never again play a major role in national politics. In his Bavarian stronghold he will simply illustrate the wisdom of A. A. Milne's observation:

> A bear however hard he tries,
> Grows tubby without exercise.

The Strauss candidature was neither as successful nor as disastrous as some hoped and others feared. The CDU lost first votes (cast in constitu encies of candidates) and second votes (cast nationally for parties) in equal measure, showing that CDU supporters who opposed Strauss did not make use of the option of voting for a CDU candidate in the constituency but for another party nationally.

The CDU/CSU results as a whole concealed the relatively strong performance of the CSU. The CDU lost sixteen seats, and had its worst result since 1949; the CSU lost one seat, and enjoyed its second best result since 1949. In broader terms, however, the CDU and its leader Helmut Kohl have been immensely strengthened in their dealings with their fractious coalition partner, the CSU. In the past the CSU saw itself as the 'consolidator' of the CDU, with the task of keeping the CDU true to conservative first principles when it threatened to compromise them. The CSU will now have to content itself with a more modest and complaisant role. There is no danger of a repetition of the sequel to the 1976 Bundestag election, when by the Kreuth resolution of 19 November 1976 the CSU briefly threatened to break its link with the CDU.

With the CSU chastened, its leader pushed to the sidelines, and the dominance of the central equilibrium of West German politics confirmed, Helmut Kohl can now harvest the fruits of the long years of patient moderation. In 1976 he took the CDU/CSU to within 1.4% of an absolute majority. Thereafter he preserved his poise and dignity in the face of outrageous disloyalty from Strauss and short-sighted ingratitude from many in his own party. After the selection of Strauss and his own supplanting as Chancellor candidate he deftly displayed loyalty to Strauss while preserving the distance necessary to secure his own chances in the future. After the election defeat of October 1980 both parties have—no doubt four years too late—rallied behind him. There is little doubt that he will be the Chancellor-candidate of the two parties in 1984. For the first time since Adenauer stepped down in 1963 the conservative parties have no leadership problems.

The SPD represented the left in electoral terms and was disappointed by its victory. In 1972 at the moment of its greatest electoral success Chancellor Brandt had proclaimed it to be the party of the 'new middle'. It had hoped to become the largest party in the Bundestag or even attain an absolute majority. Its vote increased by 0.3% but at 42.9% this total was well short of the 45.8% achieved in 1972. Throughout the campaign the party suffered from a discrepancy between the popularity of Chancellor Helmut Schmidt and the popularity of his party, the SPD. The popu-

larity of Schmidt ensured that the SPD was irredeemably mortgaged to him. He has presented himself as a coalition rather than as an SPD Chancellor. While this has benefited the coalition with the FDP, it has not necessarily rebounded to the advantage of the SPD. Many electors believe that Schmidt belongs to the wrong party. An increasing number of members of his own party seem to share that conviction.

The great surprise of the election was the success of the FDP, whose vote rose from 7.9 to 10.6%. This party was the real victor of the election. The size of its gain was such that the party gained votes from both the CDU and SPD, increasing its votes in every Land and attracting above all the votes of secular, upwardly mobile 'new middle class' voters in service industries.

The SPD has been left with the conviction that the FDP has reaped where the SPD has sown. The SPD has consistently treated its small coalition partner with a marked deference. In the 1950s the FDP was in coalition with the CDU/CSU and, being to the right of the CDU, had no other home to which to go. Hence Adenauer was able to treat the FDP with a brusqueness which bordered on the contemptuous. In the 1960s the FDP moved to the left and formed coalitions with the SPD first at state, then in 1969 at Federal level. It remains to the right of the SPD and can threaten to return to the CDU. Partly because of this factor the FDP has enjoyed an influence in government out of all proportion to its size. In particular the entrepreneurial wing of the FDP has blocked the SPD's attempts to extend co-determination in industry. The SPD has given the FDP more than equal treatment. No SPD Chancellor has treated the FDP in the manner of Adenauer.

The resentment of the SPD at the disproportionate advantage which accrues to the FDP from the coalition is aggravated by the knowledge that no degree of complaisance on the part of the SPD can alter the inherent fickleness of the FDP. Ever since 1949 the problem of the FDP has been how to preserve its distinctive character—its party profile—in coalition with a larger party. The indefinite prolongation of a coalition arrangement with one party threatens to rob the party of its autonomy. From this point of view the problem of the FDP is, when to leave the boat. On the other hand, changes of coalition partner have invariably proved disastrous for the FDP. On 27 October 1966 it anticipated the CSU by withdrawing its four ministers from Erhard's government. This action led to the formation of the Grand Coalition of the SPD and CDU/CSU. In the next general election in 1969 the FDP's vote fell to 5.8%, only 0.8% above the 5% threshold of German electoral law, below which a party's votes are disregarded.

The question for the future is, therefore, whether the SPD will tire of the FDP before the FDP screws up its resolution to desert the SPD. If the SPD decides to anticipate a move by the FDP to break up the coalition, it could offer to reconstitute the Grand Coalition with the CDU, which might in turn afford an occasion for the CDU to break its link with the CSU.

In summary, the results of the West German Bundestag election of 5 October 1980 were:

| | 1976 | | 1980 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Voters participating | 90.7% | | 88.7% | |
| | %age of party votes | Bundestag seats | %age of party votes | Bundestag seats |
| CDU/CSU | 48.6 | 243 | 44.5 | 226 |
| SPD | 42.6 | 214 | 42.9 | 218 |
| FDP | 7.9 | 39 | 10.6 | 52 |
| Others | 0.9 | — | 2.0 | — |

These figures have been overshadowed in importance by the comparative weakness of the West German economy which has become a major source of concern. Since the spring of 1979 the economy of West Germany has entered a new situation as a result of large and still increasing deficits on current account. In 1980 (January-December) this deficit totalled 28.1 billion DM (£6 billion at current exchange rates)—the highest deficit in the Western world. This balance of payments deficit has depressed the exchange value of the currency. Between October 1980 and February 1981 the D-Mark depreciated by 15½% against the dollar, and 13½% against the pound. The pre-Christmas *Spiegel* asked: 'How soft is the D-Mark?'. The GNP will fall by 1% in the first six months of 1981, while unemployment is now over one million.

These factors played little role in the election campaign or its outcome. The CDU/CSU, curiously assisted by the Conference of Catholic Bishops, made considerable noise about the high level of public borrowing. In 1980 this rose to 58 billion DM (£12.3 billion). This figure approaches the Public Sector Borrowing Requirement (PSBR) in Britain in 1980-1 of £13.5 billion. The two figures are scarcely comparable, however, as the West Germany GNP is 190% larger than the British. These broad economic problems have yet to make an impact on the ordinary citizen in terms of higher unemployment or currency erosion. Nevertheless, these developments do call into question earlier economic policy solutions and the system of economic management in West Germany.

Since the early 1970s controversy has seethed around the question: is monetarism the way to prevent or cure inflation? 'Monetarism' is a broad rather than a specific term. It embraces a number of assumptions about the relationship between employment and output on one hand, prices and interest rates on the other. It is also a philosophy of the proper role of government in the management of the economy. Its tenets can be summarised as follows. Inflation is always and everywhere a monetary phenomenon in a *causal* sense, i.e. an increase in the supply of money is par excellence the cause of inflation. There is a strong positive correlation between the amount a government borrows and the rate of growth of money supply: the money supply is therefore controllable because it is determined by government borrowing. Government borrowing takes up

resources which would otherwise be available for private expenditure and therefore governments cannot spend their way out of unemployment. In any case there is a natural rate of unemployment and if governments try to reduce unemployment below this level it will lead to ever-increasing inflation.

The essence of monetarism is thus the view that inflation is primarily a monetary phenomenon. The post-war British consensus on these matters was reflected in the Radcliffe Report (1959), which consistently maintained that the real economy of jobs and production was the cause of fiscal and monetary changes, rather than vice-versa.

This consensus came under increasing challenge after 1969 as the British inflation rate climbed to a peak of 26% in 1975. Since 1979 Mrs. Thatcher's government have wholeheartedly embraced monetarist solutions to Britain's economic problems.

In West Germany by contrast the monetarist view of inflation has never been in doubt. The currency reform of 18 June 1948 was based on monetarist premises. When the old Reichsmark currency was replaced by the D-Mark, the size of the new note issue was strictly limited. Per head West Germans were only allowed to exchange 60 Reichsmark for 60 D-Mark. Reichsmark assets were converted into new currency at a fixed ratio which greatly reduced the volume of money. Initially there was an absolute limit to the amount of notes which the German central bank could issue.

Thereafter appropriate institutional arrangements were established to protect the currency from depreciation by the government. Economic policy making was split between the Federal government and the Bundesbank (Federal Bank). The government was given responsibility for fiscal policy, while the Bundesbank was given control of monetary policy. The Bundesbank must in general support the policies of the government, but within its own sphere of responsibility it enjoys independence and takes orders from no one. The Bundesbank Law of 1957 gave the bank a statutory mandate to maintain price stability.

Since its foundation the overriding policy of the Bundesbank has been to control inflation by monetarist means. In the March 1981 issue of the Monthly Report of the Bundesbank, the bank offers a spirited defence and justification of its monetarist philosophy and policies: 'If, as hitherto, inflationary tendencies can largely be kept out of Germany, the principal condition for sound long-term economic growth and for a high level of employment will be safeguarded.'

Why has the Bundesbank attached such importance to the control of inflation as a condition of economic health? The answer lies in the economic philosophy of the 'social market economy' which was adopted around the same time as the currency reform. The meaning of the attribute 'social' in this context has always been vapid and in practice there is no difference between 'social market economy' and 'market economy'. The market economy regards a limited role of the government in the economy

as 'proper' and 'natural'. Above all it sees the functioning of the price mechanism as central to the allocation of resources and establishment of priorities. The price mechanism can only function properly if the value of money in which prices are expressed is reasonably stable. The structure of relative prices becomes seriously distorted if the level of prices is subject to constant change. In a stable environment resources will be allocated to the sectors where demand is greatest. In an inflationary environment resources will be allocated to the sectors which offer the greatest profits from or best defence against currency depreciation: real growth is bound to suffer in the process. As believers in the market mechanisms, West Germans have therefore seen price stability as a precondition for high levels of growth and employment.

In the new situation which has arisen for the West German economy in the last two years the Bundesbank has continued to rely on the old proven formulae and methods. It has attacked what its February 1981 Report reproachfully calls the 'massive budget deficits' in public expenditure. The public sector deficit has risen as follows:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1977 | 31 | Billion DM |
| 1978 | 39 | ,, |
| 1979 | 47 | ,, |
| 1980 | 58 | ,, |

Government borrowing, however, has not been cast as the villain of the piece in the simplistic manner which has become a new orthodoxy in Britain. In Britain the Public Sector Borrowing Requirement has been enthroned at the centre of government policy, on the grounds that the size of the PSBR determines the growth of money supply, and the growth of money supply governs the rate of inflation. This sort of importance has not been attached to the public sector deficit in West Germany because this is regarded as something inherently unforecastable. In 1980, for example, the government had aimed to keep the deficit below the 1979 level—just as Sir Geoffrey Howe began 1980/1 with a PSBR target of £8.5 billion and ended 1980/1 with an actual deficit of £13.5 billion. Nevertheless, the West German government has deferred to the views of the Bundesbank. When the SPD-FDP coalition was reformed in October 1980, a condition of their coalition agreement was that the growth of public expenditure should be limited to 4% and the deficit should not exceed the 1980 level. As a result a wave of cuts has swept through the public sector.

The central problem which the Bundesbank identifies is that of financ ing the current account deficit. It is in this field that its policies have been the object of controversy and the source of differences between the government and the bank. The Bundesbank has pushed up domestic interest rates to attract foreign capital, in the hope of balancing the current account deficit by a capital inflow and raising the exchange of the currency.

West Germany has hitherto been able to enjoy monetarism without tears. The current policies of the Bundesbank will, it is feared, impose a

cost in terms of output, growth, the provision of public services and employment. The German economy has always been distinguished by an exceptionally high level of utilisation of capital. A rise in interest rates of 3% can result in businesses paying 10% more for the loans on which they depend. Once a price has to be paid for adherence to an economic theory, it is natural that people should ask whether continued adherence to that theory is appropriate in changed circumstances. Under its most independent Chairman ever, Karl Otto Poehl, the Bundesbank has stood its ground and warned that depreciation of the external value of the currency may drag the economy into an upwards domestic spiral of inflation. The attitude of the Bundesbank has occasioned sharp differences with Chancellor Schmidt and a wave of criticism of the bank within his party. These critics have in turn questioned the continued utility of the Bundesbank's independence from the government.

Outside government circles there has arisen a more fundamental challenge to the practice and assumptions of the social market economy, in the form of the widespread anti-nuclear campaign and the squatters' movement in cities.

In Germany there exists what Gregor Strasser in an unforgettable phrase called a spirit of 'anti-capitalist nostalgia', a romantic hostility to the modern world. It is always endemic and occasionally epidemic. During the long years of West German prosperity this spirit has been largely muted. The change-over to deficit in the German balance of payments has been largely oil-induced. The only practical alternative source of energy which can sustain the level of consumption of a highly industrialized society is atomic power. The development of atomic power is vital for the continuance of full employment, economic growth and the materialism of a consumer society. To those who do not share the values of their containing society and believe that some alternative social and economic system is both desirable and possible, the revolution in oil prices in the 1970s presents an opportunity rather than a problem. Nuclear power is not only a symbol of all that they reject. It provides a means by which the present system can prolong its life beyond its natural term, it is a way of blocking and diverting that desirable change in society which would otherwise perforce come about because of the inability of modern capitalist society to meet its demand for energy resources.

Coincidentally there has arisen chiefly in West Berlin but also in a score of quiet provincial cities a violent and embattled squatters' movement. Squatters have taken over unoccupied blocks in city centres and challenged the authorities to evict them. Some authorities have turned the other cheek, others have made a stand on the majesty of the law. Violent confrontations have proved unavoidable. The squatters' movement and the anti-nuclear movement have much in common in terms of support and outlook. Their attitudes are outside the consensus which has hitherto prevailed in West Germany and their methods to many seem the negation of democracy. To the young people involved, however, it is true democracy—the democracy of the streets. To conservative democrats there

seems no choice between Caesarism and anarchy.

The West German election has thus failed to solve the real problems of West Germany in the 1980s. To some extent West Germany has succumbed to the general ills of late-industrial society which consist in a falling-off not in absolute terms but in relation to expectations. This in turn has nourished the hopes of those looking for radical change. The Bundesbank itself has been anxious to look at West Germany's situation in wider terms. In its December Report it reviewed the various contributory factors and concluded that 'they are not merely a consequence of the increase in oil prices . . . and not simply a cyclical phenomenon that would disappear together with the economic slowdown but to a considerable extent a longer term and hence structural problem.' On this view West Germany is entering into a development which all advanced industrial democracies seemed destined to undergo.

West Germany thus enters the 1980s with a consensus superficially intact but increasingly fragile. On the other hand, West Germans have displayed since 1949 an almost limitless dedication to their own long-term interest which is not likely to be diverted from its course by oil-deficits, the anti-nuclear movement or other domestic discontents.

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[Dr. Southern is Lecturer in Politics at Kent University. He is currently engaged on a study of the West German Constitution.]

# THE LABOUR PARTY IN 1981

## by Kevin Featherstone

AT the start of the 1960s, in a book which came to be regarded as a standard text on the Labour and Conservative parties, Robert McKenzie was able to describe their internal structure in the following manner:

> The distribution of power within British political parties is primarily a function of cabinet government and the British parliamentary system. . . . . Whatever the role granted in theory to the extra-parliamentary wings of the parties, in practice final authority rests in both parties with the parliamentary party and its leadership. In this fundamental respect the distribution of power within the two major parties is the same.[1]

After the events of the Labour Party's Annual Conference at Blackpool in 1980 and Special Conference at Wembley in January of this year, few observers of contemporary British politics would doubt that the above description was in need of serious revision. Indeed, much attention in the media has been focussed on how the extra-parliamentary 'wing' in the Labour Party has forced through changes in the party's constitution against the advice of the parliamentary leadership and a majority of Labour MPs. In a more recent study of the Labour Party Conference, Lewis Minkin has highlighted how the internal power structure of the party has changed from that described by McKenzie.[2] An 'extraordinary revolt' amongst constituency activists has taken place, which has affected both the constituency representatives on the party's National Executive Committee and the delegations sent by the trade unions to the Annual Conference. The effect of this pressure has now resulted in 'a major reassertion of the right of the Party outside the House of Commons to formulate the Party's policy and a mounting tide of demands for more accountability'. It is fed by 'a belief now widespread within the party—that the gulf between the policies proposed by the Conference and the policies pursued by the parliamentary leadership must be closed'.

As a result of this pressure from constituency party activists, the Labour Party, after Blackpool and Wembley, has now approved two major changes to its constitution. Firstly, it has introduced a re-selection process for sitting Labour MPs that will be mandatory on local parties. A local General Management Committee will now be able to choose between rival candidates for the official party nomination at the next election, mid-way through the life of a normal Parliament. A sitting MP will automatically have the right to be considered in such a selection, but as compared to the previous system in which MPs were often re-adopted after an election had already been called, the new process will make it easier for local parties to 'ditch' their sitting MP. The Special Conference at Wembley made a further major change to the party constitution by creating an electoral college for the election of the Leader and Deputy Leader of the party. Whilst under the previous system only the parliamentary party could vote in the election, the new electoral college will

give 70% of the vote to the extra-parliamentary party (40% to affiliated trade unions, 30% to Constituency Labour Parties) and only 30% of the vote to MPs. At Blackpool, an attempt had also been made to give the NEC sole control over the content of the party's election manifesto rather than having it drawn up after joint consultation between the Shadow Cabinet and the NEC, as during such meetings the party leader has come to exercise a personal veto over the final content. However, the proposal was defeated in the conference vote.

The above developments have had a serious impact on the parliamentary party. Already this year, upwards of a dozen Labour MPs and a number of Peers have joined the new 'Council for Social Democracy' and formed a separate group in the Commons. The creation of their new party represents the biggest breakaway from any parliamentary party in Britain since the days of Ramsay MacDonald. The group, headed by Roy Jenkins, Shirley Williams, David Owen and William Rodgers, seek a realignment of the current party system aimed at establishing a Social Democratic-Liberal coalition government after the next election.

However, many of these Labour MPs that have stayed in the party are also opposed to the direction they see having been given by the Blackpool and Wembley conferences. Such disaffection has led to the establishment of yet another group within the party, the 'Labour Solidarity Campaign', which claims the support of over 100 MPs, including Denis Healey, Peter Shore and Roy Hattersley. The concern of such MPs is based on the threat they see to the representative role of the MP and the fear they have of the MP being turned into a delegate of the party, with little scope being allowed for individual deviations from party policy.

Because of such disaffection amongst members of the Parliamentary Labour Party, it is very likely that moves will be made to change the Wembley decisions on the electoral college, at the party's annual conference at Brighton in October. Conference votes in the Labour Party are largely determined by the line-up of the union block votes—they account for almost 90% of the votes—and the outcome of the January Special Conference on the electoral college rested on a peculiar configuration of union votes. Most importantly, the large block vote of the AUEW engineering union was not cast in two important votes on the composition of the electoral college (as the union's delegates were mandated to abstain); if they had been, it is almost certain that the compromise formula supported by party leader Michael Foot would have been passed. If in the months before the October conference, some unions were to seek to change the decision on the electoral college it is quite possible that the breach within the party could be prevented from becoming any wider, though the pressure from the grass-roots in support of such changes is not to be under-estimated.

The breakaway by the right-wing Social Democrats, moreover, appears to be more a matter of strategy than of ideology. They allege though that there is no room for social democratic policies within the current Labour Party. They claim that Labour has moved so far to the Left that

the principles laid down by Anthony Crosland in his seminal work, *The Future of Socialism,* have been replaced by the 'Bennery" of the alternative economic strategy propounded by the Tribunite Left. Despite the fact that almost the whole of Fleet Street accepts their analysis and indeed has criticised them only for delaying the break, I would suggest that their actions could have such far-reaching implications for the future of British politics that the rationale they put forward warrants the closest scrutiny.

With a well organised campaign in conjunction with the Liberals, the new Social Democratic party could deny the Labour Party a majority at the next election by, at least, partially blocking any anti-Tory swing. In that sense, their strategy could prove to be quite successful—a minority Labour Government might even have to rely on their support. If a Conservative Government was to be returned at the next election, then their criticisms of Labour Party policy would seem to have been validated at the ballot box. However, ideologically, their rationale for a breakaway seems less strong. The Social Democrats are in effect claiming that they could not participate in or support a future Labour Cabinet because they would not share the same principles and philosophy. But such a future Labour Cabinet would almost certainly include such figures as Denis Healey, Roy Hattersley, Eric Varley, Merlyn Rees and Gerald Kaufman as prominent members within it. Each one of them would be regarded as 'social democrats' and all but Gerald Kaufman was in the last Callaghan Cabinet. On questions of public ownership, nuclear defence, Europe, and incomes policy, it would be hard to find any disagreement between such Members and those seemingly intent on leaving the Party.

The Labour Party, before its 1981 conference at Brighton, is clearly less united than for several years. The party outside Parliament is seeking to exert more control over the future direction of the party, and a substantial proportion of the PLP dislikes the course they suggest. The balance of the party's internal triangle—PLP-Unions-Constituency Parties —has been substantially re-shaped from that existing for most of the post-war period, but as ever its future operation will fundamentally depend on the allegiances entered into by the major trade unions. For those seeking unity within the party, much will be expected of the parliamentary leadership. Though given its current impotence—which has been likened to that of 1931—it will no doubt have a very difficult task ahead. If it fails, we could see the final break-up of Britain's two-party system.

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NOTES:

1. R. T. McKenzie, *British Political Parties,* 2nd Edition (London, Heinemann, 1967), p. 635.
2. L. Minkin, *The Labour Party Conference,* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1980).

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[Kevin Featherstone is a lecturer in Political Studies at the University of Stirling.]

# SEEDS OF ATTILA—AN INFANTRY VIEW

## by J. I. H. Owen

NATO is now over 31 years old and that it is so is a matter for self-congratulation. It is unlikely that peace would have been maintained without the creation of the alliance in 1949. The creation of these two powerful blocks has probably reduced the inclination and ability to improve relations between the East and West and block diplomacy, as it is called, has perhaps been a hindrance rather than a help. Certainly, NATO did little or nothing to prevent the Soviet Union moving into Hungary in 1956 or Czechoslovakia in 1968. In addition to Hungary and Czechoslovakia, the Warsaw Pact had its problems in Romania, and in Poland which now seem to be increasing. Outwardly, the Soviet Union has maintained a sort of unity which, in the West, we would argue as being a mailed fist in an iron glove, but the cohesion of the Pact countries in war time is a matter for conjecture.

On the other hand, NATO was formed for the mutual protection of the Western European democracies and of the other less democratic countries in Europe which wished to join it. Moves are now afoot to extend the influence of NATO outside Europe. Be that as it may, it is a fact that peace has been preserved and the countries of Europe have, on the whole, flourished under this defence system.

The alliance is stronger today than might have been thought several years ago. Recently Turkey and Greece, having been at each other's throats, seem to have come to some accommodation; Portugal has returned to democracy; there are communist problems in Italy and to a lesser extent in France, but these seem to be contained—at least for the moment. France, however, remains an enigma for she has not committed forces to NATO since General de Gaulle withdrew from the military organisation. Certainly, NATO still has its problems, but it would be surprising if this were not so.

In the early days of NATO, the United States of America enjoyed an absolute superiority in nuclear weapons and NATO strategy was based on what was aptly, even optimistically, called the trip wire concept. In other words, the primary function of our ground forces in the NATO area was to act as a trigger for nuclear retaliation in the event of a War saw Pact attack. However, the Soviet Union has now achieved parity with the United States—or even surpassed it—so the NATO nuclear deterrent no longer carries the same weight. The deterrent balance has been disturbed; horrific as it is, it is no longer in NATO's favour and NATO's conventional capabilities are now, therefore, of much greater value to us than ever before.

This view is fine up to a point, but technological advances in a number of other fields have led to the development of weapons and devices which have directly brought about changes in the organisation, structure, equipment, and the tactics and employment of conventional forces. Increased

mobility and new weapons have enabled our combat forces to deploy, or disperse, over a wide front (or in depth), and so reduce the density of our forces and thus the targets they present in the battle areas. Nowadays, a land force must be able to seize and maintain the initiative as well as seizing ground. The ability to move troops with their equipment and supplies over and through an opponent's defensive areas is still necessary to achieve military success.

In Europe, Warsaw Pact and NATO ground forces are organised and equipped for such mobile warfare, but it cannot be denied that the Warsaw Pact has numerical tank superiority over the NATO forces (some 21,000 tanks in the Warsaw Pact as compared with 7,000 in NATO). However, this apparent superiority in armour may not pose an indisputable threat. In 1973, the Arab-Israeli war showed that modern tanks are vulnerable to guided weapons which were then, for the first time, extensively deployed by infantry on the battlefield. The apparent effectiveness of these precision-guided weapons against mass tank attacks in that war has led to renewed development efforts. The value of the individual infantry soldier, as a tank-killer, cannot be denied. In Europe, the US forces already deploy Tow, Dragon and Cobra devices; Milan is also deployed with other NATO forces. Several other equally, or more, advanced anti-tank weapons are in prototype form or undergoing evaluation with NATO. The Warsaw Pact forces are equipped with Soviet anti-tank weapons and, in addition to the RPG-7 grenade-launcher and a number of recoilless guns, they have the wire guided Snapper, Swatter and Sagger missiles.

While these weapons give grounds for optimism in the battle against tanks, the disparity of the tank strengths, as well as the Soviet superiority in artillery and aircraft numbers, suggests that a Warsaw Pact lightning strike could overrun NATO forces in West Germany and beyond in a matter of days unless it was stopped with tactical nuclear weapons. It is for this reason that Soviet military doctrine has stated that Warsaw Pact forces must be prepared for war to be nuclear from the very start of a conflict. It is cold comfort, perhaps, that strong NATO conventional forces could force the Soviet Union to 'go nuclear' first, whereas weak NATO conventional forces would give NATO that heavy responsibility. In the former case, however there would probably be a greater delay in the initiation of nuclear warfare.

Although the Warsaw Pact armoured and motorised divisions are lighter than their NATO counterparts, in fire power and numbers of armoured vehicles they are at least equal to NATO divisions. After a tactical nuclear strike, the former could advance at an average speed of about 100 km per day on a narrow front. In addition, Warsaw Pact tactical doctrine for such warfare calls for the employment of mass airborne and/or amphibious units together with their huge armoured formations to launch a surprise attack—with nuclear support.

Warsaw Pact training is carried out against a background of nuclear and chemical warfare. The tactics are concerned primarily with offence

and are based on the Soviet doctrine of war of movement. In simple terms, this proposes an initial strike in considerable depth which is followed by a quick advance by armoured forces deep into the enemy rear. As mentioned above, the aim of such a formation is to cover about 100 km per day; night fighting and night movement are favoured and the infantry will use their APCs as 'battle taxis', dismounting short of the objective and making the final assault on foot. However, as in all armies, there is a marked and understandable reluctance to get out from under the cover of armour when under fire and it is becoming more likely that APC-borne infantry will dismount only when they reach their objectives, having fired from their APCs on the way to the objective. The preponderance of Warsaw Pact armour over that of NATO is unarguable and this fact seems to have taken a hold, with renewed vigour, on the minds of those concerned with the NATO armies. A great deal has been, and is being, done to redress this imbalance by an increased use of guided missiles.

Between 1939 and 1945 the infantry were subordinated to the armour. Times have changed as has been well illustrated in the 1973 Middle East war. The Arab infantry demonstrated a new ability to stop tanks with the help of Russian made wire-guided missiles. Thus the infantry can now play a greatly enhanced part on the battlefield, greater than, perhaps, at any time since the introduction of the rifle or of the grenade. This is largely due to the development of the guided missile which enables the skilled individual soldier to deal with a 50 or 70 ton tank. NATO forces have an in-built advantage in that they are on the defensive and, given only limited surprise advantage to the Warsaw Pact forces, the latter would have to deploy considerable numerical strength against the West if an attack is to succeed—and succeed without recourse to tactical nuclear weapons and thus the holocaust that must surely follow their introduction.

Having said all that, the military balance between the East and West remains a matter for concern. No two sets of figures ever agree. They also depend upon the number of French troops that can be included; nothing seems to have come of the mutual balanced force reductions (MBFR) and this is partly due to our inability to decide upon a starting point of strengths. However, nobody can make the balance favourable to NATO in the short term. In the longer term, NATO's larger and stronger industrial base, its unique technological capabilities and, in the event, a larger manpower pool offer a slight, albeit theoretical, edge.

The Soviet Union has been the arsenal of the Warsaw Pact countries since it was formed in 1945; it has either sold, or permitted to be built under licence, Soviet weapons and equipment. This policy has achieved a high degree of standardisation of weapons and equipment and, in so doing, has just about ensured that the satellite countries are totally dependent on the Soviet Union for weapons, equipment and, in particular, their spares. On the other hand, the present wealth of weapon systems in NATO armoury is confusing. There are, for example, at least six models

of tanks, 20 kinds of combat aircraft and more than 100 types of tactical missiles. A sadder record could be made of communications equipment.

It is politically and economically difficult for the West with its individual, large and indigenous arms industries to abandon national development in favour of buying weapons from another country. Indeed, complete standardisation could damage national arms industries by curbing technical innovation in favour of some happy compromise. Moreover, it would be much easier for the Soviet forces to jam one uniform NATO missile system than to achieve the same results with the variety now deployed. However, the crucial needs are standard ammunition, compat ible communications and inter-operability.

Military training in the Warsaw Pact forces entails much more than the acquisition of basic military skills. To the military authorities in Moscow, military training means the production of a *communist* soldier. This is a process which demands the development of the right ideology and political views, a very high state of discipline, a capacity for self sacrifice, the unquestioning obedience of commanders and a complete loyalty to the party. Add to this, unflinching courage in the face of danger and uncomplaining endurance and you summarise many of the characteristics required by Soviet doctrine of the Warsaw Pact soldier.

Training is carried out six days a week and is intense and realistic. Combat conditions are closely simulated. The Soviet training programme is intended to produce efficient and tough soldiers well-integrated into well-organised battle teams. The theme of combat readiness is stressed as an important objective of training and, for example, live ammunition is often carried and used during field exercises.

Although, as stated already, it seems unlikely that the Soviet Union could achieve total surprise in an attack on the West (for it would be unable to disguise its mobilisation, even under the cover of routine military manoeuvres), the Warsaw Pact forces do enjoy advantages of initiative and reinforcement potential. However, even after NATO might have decided to mobilize in the face of a Soviet build up in Europe, one must question whether our soldiers would be ready and willing to go to war. Most believe that, provided it is a 'good' war, few would hold back when the time came. However, there are some short-comings. For example, NATO troops spend too little time on large formation training. This is partly due to the short periods of conscription in some countries which preclude such training; there is the cost of mounting a large-scale exercise and, finally, the reluctance to allow farm land or even the roads to be invaded by NATO tanks and infantry which, with the best will in the world, can do a considerable amount of damage without even firing a shot.

Morale amongst the troops varies. In the GDR army, the soldier is well-paid and dedicated; his morale is high and his efficiency unquestioned. Polish soldiers are tenacious and dedicated—but more to Poland than the Pact. The Bulgarians, the Czechs and the Romanians probably have little stomach for their task. In the West, the Americans, the British

and the French are well-equipped and with proven fighting qualities. The West Germans, despite their low profile, are an efficient and vital cog in the NATO machine. As for the remainder, there are degrees of toughness and efficiency from which we must deduct, in some cases, failings of size, weaknesses in equipment and lack of staying power.

Another important consideration is the rate at which opposing forces in Europe could be reinforced and resupplied. In the early days of crises, the advantage of reinforcement and resupply would surely lie with the Warsaw Pact. They enjoy internal lines of communication and they have the choice of fronts on which to attack. The ability of NATO forces to reinforce the flanks is dubious and the ability to adequately reinforce the centre in time is even less likely. NATO must therefore be prepared to fight with the forces it keeps in position on the ground.

Much of the NATO equipment, however, although superior to that of the Warsaw Pact, is available in smaller numbers. Man for man the NATO soldier is probably better than his opponent in the Warsaw Pact, who will need a numerical superiority of about three to one to be sure of success in any attack and such a preponderance would be difficult for the Warsaw Pact to achieve without mobilisation. This would enable the NATO forces to make at least essential deployments just in time.

It can be said that both sides might have difficulty in meeting a sudden demand to switch from peace to war, but the Warsaw Pact has the advantage of having more weapons in place and of being able to call up reinforcements of men and material more quickly. NATO troops are more imaginatively trained and more adaptable and one hopes that this will prove crucial. Nevertheless, we cannot ignore that the equipment and organisation of the Warsaw Pact forces are very good; training is realistic and morale is usually high. However, the Soviet forces have not had the experience of colonial-type wars, as have some of the NATO armies, but this advantage can, to a certain extent, be limited by the reluctance on the part of NATO to conduct formation exercises. In many ways, too, the shortage of equipment would preclude this on a large and realistic scale, and we must not forget our present reduced capability to operate airborne and amphibious forces strategically and tactically.

We, in NATO, cannot therefore lower our guard and must not lose our nerve. Time is on our side and any show of weakness on the part of the West could lose us the war before it has begun.

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[Major-General J. I. H. Owen, O.B.E., attended the Royal College of Defence Studies in 1971 and was Major-General of Commando Forces, R.M., in 1972/73. Publications include Brassey's Infantry Weapons of the World (1975 and 1979) and Brassey's Warsaw Pact Infantry Weapons, 1979.]

## POEM

### MINIATURE BATTLE SCENE — WAR MUSEUM

Who cares if history repeats itself
or if some small truth filters through
an old piece of shrapnel in a war museum
or if, in the same place, a toy battlefield
needs painting again
or should be dusted

Tiny planes hang on fine wires
Little lights flicker in their wings
Pieces of cotton wool explode silently
under the high white ceiling

Someone created this miniature battle scene
to tell the world how sadness breaks in half
how roads buckle and end
with bent steel bones of bridges
and how napalm will quench a town's thirst
and drown five hundred men
straining to gush from their own flames
into painlessness

Someone will go down
through wires into the heart
who will rub blood in
who might hear rifleshots
next to him in the night earth
and fire swallows through the air
instead of bullets
—and light.

JOHN MILLETT

# THE VICIOUS CIRCLE OF THE THIRD WORLD'S TOBACCO ECONOMY

## by Thomas Land

AN authoritative study published in London by the Commonwealth Secretariat shows that, despite all exhortations, health statistics and common sense, world consumption of tobacco is continuing to rise —especially in the poorest countries. The market forces generated by the tobacco industry conspire against the fragile economies of the developing countries which have overtaken the rich world both in the production and the consumption of cigarettes. Many poor countries particularly in Africa entered the tobacco business in a big way only recently in the hope of raising a foreign exchange income to finance much needed economic development.

But the price they must pay—in terms of deteriorating health standards of their populations, long-term and perhaps irreversible ecological damage to their dwindling woodlands and a net loss of domestic food production—outweighs the advantages. And like all smokers, they find quitting increasingly difficult.

Yet there is an escape route. Two international organizations are collaborating in an important study to compare the economic benefits of tobacco production with the health-cost of smoking-related diseases. Specialists of the United Nations' World Health Organization (WHO) in Geneva and its Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in Rome hope to evolve a model for use by tobacco growing countries considering a switch to food crops. The study may well spearhead a global campaign against smoking. It will involve many other international organizations also, and concern such essential issues as crop substitution and market forces affecting the most important person in the entire Third World tobacco economy: the peasant grower.

The transition will be painful. Cigarette sales in many rich countries are levelling off as word spreads of the death toll of smoking—'but the world cigarette industry now savouring yearly sales of nearly four trillion cigarettes, for which the consumers spend an estimated $85 to $100 billion, is hardly in despair,' observes a recent Worldwatch Institute paper published in Washington. The reason is that 'a vast potential market in the Third World—much of which has not yet entered the era of tobacco induced disease and death—is crystallizing. Corporate advertisers and governments of all political hues are fostering tomorrow's deaths in Africa, Asia and Latin America.'

WHO considers that the control of cigarette smoking in the developing countries 'could do more to improve health and prolong life . . . than any other single action in the whole field of preventive medicine.'

But cigarette packages sold in the developing countries carry no health warnings—as they do in the rich world—and deliver more cancer-causing

tars than the amount permitted in the same brands in Europe and North America. While the best educated and privileged classes of the rich world tend to stop smoking, the tobacco industry has now embarked on aggressive advertising campaigns in the developing regions where the largest increases in smoking now occur.

And the poorest people are further impoverished because, with its sharp seasonal peaks in labour needs, the tobacco industry requires an available pool of unemployed labour, writes Mike Muller in *Tomorrow's Epidemic,* an authoritative study published by War on Want. Once tobacco is established as a crop, it becomes increasingly difficult to change its pattern of exploitation and unemployment; while the present unemployment problems associated with tobacco production are expected to intensify with the introduction of new technologies.

Most tobacco grown in the developing countries is also consumed there in addition to imports of high-tar tobacco from the rich world off-loaded as 'aid'. Muller says that the developing countries have been unable to resist such a prescription for economic, ecological, agricultural and health disaster 'because the tobacco companies offer a package deal which operates on every level: from teaching the farmer how to grow the tobacco is established as a crop, it becomes increasingly difficult to through brand names and advertising, and offering profit opportunities to the ruling families or other influential people'.

Who are, then, the tobacco companies? Frederick Clairmonte, an economist with the UN's Conference on Trade and Development which recently published an analysis of the industry, explains that the entire tobacco economy has been fashioned by the dominance of seven transnational conglomerates. 'At all stages of the production and marketing chain,' he says, 'a handful of giant corporations, whose epicentres of power remain in the United States, South Africa and the United Kingdom, exercises decisive control.'

He goes on: 'The tobacco industry now straddles, through cross-subsidization, the entire spectrum of modern industry transportation, services, agri-business and plantation agriculture'. . . Developing countries supply 55 per cent of the world leaf tobacco through foreign-controlled marketing channels; their processed exports are almost non-existent; they have no influence whatever in the design, output and innovation of machinery and their aggregate receipts from the industry are based almost exclusively on the demand and marketing decisions made by the companies.

In a leading article, the *British Medical Journal* recently argued that the British Government bears a special responsibility for the conduct of the tobacco industry in the Third World 'because this country is the base for some of the world's largest multi-national tobacco companies'. The effect of the tobacco industry in the developing countries is complex and often irreversible. Tobacco does not only occupy valuable acres of agricultural soil which might otherwise be put to essential crops; it also aggravates the poor man's energy crisis and encourages the spread of the deserts.

Earthscan, the UN's media unit concerned with global environmental problems, explains in a recent background paper that the process by which the green tobacco leaf is cured to the familiar yellow colour requires constant high temperatures for fermentation to take place. On the rich tobacco farms of Canada and the United States, the requisite heat is generated by oil and gas burners; but such forms of energy are much too expensive in the developing regions. Growers there use firewood instead. For every acre of flue-cured Virginia tobacco grown in the developing countries, an acre of woodland thus must go up in smoke.

Woodlands are limited. The UN Environment Programme in Nairobi warns that the shortage of firewood contributes to the rapid degradation of soil in many poor countries, for firewood is still the basic energy source for the many millions of rural people of Africa and the other hungry continents.

As one specialist put it, 'in the semi-arid regions, the ecological consequences of undue firewood consumption contributes to the process of desertification'. This is crucial, for many tobacco growing areas in the Third World are located on the edge of dry country because the crop prospers in sandy soils. These are also the very regions most vulnerable to the expansion of the deserts.

Consider, for example, eastern Kenya which produces prosperous tobacco crops but at the expense of the deteriorating ecology affected by a relentless over-consumption of wood. Even in major tobacco producing countries, such as Malawi where land degradation is not an immediate problem, there are long-term dangers posed by the destruction of woodlands.

Tobacco farmers are running out of firewood even in heavily wooded Brazil, a leading producer of the developing world. Having depleted the local forests, many growers there are now importing coal over long distances. Similar problems are encountered in Pakistan where, according to one tobacco industry report, the use of wood as a curing fuel has placed 'severe strain' on the country's forestry resources. Pakistan is experimenting with the use of expensive imported energy to cure the crop.

The destructive economics of the tobacco trade thus come full circle. But many people still profit handsomely by the process, sharing among themselves a portion of the wealth which is just beginning to appear in the top social strata of the poor countries as a result of decades of work towards economic development. One strength of the tobacco trade is the coincidence of interests which makes for such unlikely partnerships as that linking London stock brokers with people like Lipyuti Mwasakula, a peasant grower in Zambia.

His experience, economic priorities and choice of crops grown to attain the maximum profit from his land are reflected in the Commonwealth Secretariat survey showing a steady increase in the world tobacco output unaffected by the global recession, higher taxes and anti-smoking campaigns even in such important tobacco producing countries as Zambia, Nigeria, Kenya and Egypt.

During his very first year at the Kabile Settlement Scheme, Mr. Mwasakula and his family cleared two and a half acres of land, planting one acre with maize to feed themselves and an acre and a half with tobacco, for profit. After deductions for assistance with ploughing and fertilisers by the Tobacco Board of Zambia, he saved nearly $2,000—a very handsome profit for a family in Central Africa.

'An expensive success,' observes Mr. Muller, because these Zambian 'family farms' cost something like $4,000 per unit to establish. And the true cost of the scheme is even greater than that since Zambia, which is far from self-sufficiency in agriculture, must spend hard foreign currency in order to purchase the food which is not grown on land put to tobacco.

Nevertheless, 'the small peasant who, thanks to tobacco, has won access to the monetary economy and seen his living conditions improve is not ready to abandon these advantages to please those, usually richer than himself, who come preaching to him,' comments a specialist in a recent issue of *Ceres,* the UN's journal on food and farming. 'On top of this, tobacco consumption represents quite a considerable source of tax revenue for governments.'

Hence the importance of the WHO/FAO study to establish the economic relationship between tax revenues raised through the tobacco industry and the financial cost of the diseases associated with smoking. A WHO expert committee has already warned that the adverse effects of increased cigarette consumption could well undermine current achievements in the developing world in the fields of nutrition, sanitation and the control of infectious diseases. 'A door might be opened to serious difficulties,' the specialists fear, 'if tobacco consumption were allowed to grow without control in the relatively new markets of the Third World where the powerful tobacco companies have a free hand. . . .

'In the long run, the economy of the developing countries will be negatively affected, besides the health of their populations, if they start relying on tobacco production as a source of revenue.' Taxes can be raised, in any case, through other means.

Crop diversification would be an obvious solution to the vicious circle of the Third World's new tobacco economy; but many growers like Mr. Mwasakula may well be interested only if the alternative produce offers improved profits at the end of the crop year.

Money saved from going up in expensive tobacco smoke combined with money made by putting the Third World's tobacco fields to profitable alternative cash crops such as cotton could prove a sufficient financial incentive. And the real profits would be shared by Mr. Mwasakula and his neighbours throughout the developing regions, measured in terms of improved universal health standards.

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[Thomas Land is an author and foreign correspondent who writes on global affairs from London and Geneva.]

# THE FUTURE

## by Michael Allaby

HISTORY is made by ordinary people. They have leaders, of course, whose names in due course must be crammed into the unwilling heads of schoolchildren, but leaders require followers, and there is a limit to the influence leaders can wield. All the important social, economic and political changes must enjoy a wide measure of popular support. It is the changing opinions and attitudes of individual citizens that permit change or frustrate it.

Technological innovations, which enable us to perform old tasks in new ways, or to perform tasks that are entirely new, also influence the course of history, but even they are subject to popular mediation. The motor car has provided us with greater mobility than our grandparents enjoyed, but our society has become more mobile only because such mobility was desired by most people. In the early days no one was compelled to buy a car.

Our past, then, reflects the changing attitudes of ordinary people as these are manifested in changes that affect society as a whole. It is not too difficult to look back and interpret events in the light of this awareness, to make educated guesses about the ways in which people were altering their beliefs and opinions, to know, for example, that certain wars took place because people wanted to fight or that reforms were made because a majority refused to tolerate any longer certain conditions. Hindsight is a powerful tool.

We may be certain that just as such private, secret changes made the past, so they will make the future, but this presents the so-called 'futurologist' with a difficulty that is almost insurmountable. We may know, or think we know, the way public opinion has changed in the recent past, and even the way it is changing now, but if we suppose we may know how it will change in the future we delude ourselves. If the future consists of history that has yet to happen, and if history is made by changes that by their very nature are concealed from our scrutiny, then prediction becomes at best guesswork and at worst fraud. The man who tells us he knows what will happen a century from now is either a fool or a charlatan.

Why, then, do quite serious minded, intelligent people waste their time considering that which is unknowable? Obviously, the subject is of compelling interest, but the application of even mildly rigorous intellectual discipline should debar all but fools from speculations that are bound to be fruitless.

The answer is subtle, and the fundamental difficulty is avoided by a careful definition of the terms of reference for the enquiry. Respectable futurologists (and there are others!) never make predictions as such. They may extrapolate trends they believe they can discern in the present, they may suppose particular kinds of changes, they may postulate events

of national or global significance, but in every case they are playing imaginative games of the 'what would happen if . . .' variety. Their results are to be understood not as predictions but as statements of the plausible. They may warn us of the probable consequences of certain attitudes and actions, they may show us futures that could be attained and tell us what is needed to realise them, or they may offer us many alternatives and leave us to choose. The concern of the futurologist is to counteract the inconsequentiality that has characterised much of our history. Because today we are able to predict not what will happen, but what may happen if we behave now in certain ways, we have no choice but to think about the future and to make as good a job of it as we can. Simple morality demands that we take this much account of those who must follow us.

Despite our ignorance of what motivates private change, the futurologist does not go quite naked into his world. He has the past and present and from them he may obtain clues. Unfortunately, the clues conceal yet another danger—that of predicting the immediate past. Many popular forecasts fail on this ground. During long periods of stability, when change has been gradual, such failings were not serious. Today, however, the world is changing rapidly and while there is much about the future that is hidden from us, of one thing we may be certain: tomorrow will be quite unlike yesterday.

We can know this from an examination of many of the trends that have become important in the recent past. If these trends are extrapola ted many of them lead to absurdity rather quickly. If the population of the world continues to increase, for example, it will not be long before people are packed together shoulder to shoulder from Twickenham to Tibet. If more and more people buy cars, the outcome must be a traffic jam that fills every road and renders all cars useless. Yet if we build roads to accommodate the cars the day must come when entire continents are paved. We need not enter the more controversial fields of resource avail ability to see that such trends cannot continue. This has nothing to do with the amount of crude oil concealed beneath the surface of our planet, which may or may not be sufficient to support such extraordinary growth. It has much more to do with the simple fact that history may be many things, but on the whole it is not preposterous. We see and accept this most clearly in relation to unemployment, where as individuals each of us has much at stake. If unemployment continues to rise, eventually no one will be employed, not even the statisticians. No one believes this will happen, but if it is not to happen a trend must be reversed. The fact that so many trends must be reversed shows that we live in times of change. It is as simple as that. The fact of change does not imply catastrophic change, but since all rapid large-scale change is destabilising, catastrophe remains possible.

Already we have discovered something interesting about the future: it will not resemble the past or the present. We can do better than this, for we know some of the things the future must contain. We know this either

because we can discern trends that do not lead to absurdity, or because the logic of our present situation requires them.

In Britain, as in all of the older industrial countries, the basis of the economy is shifting. We can see this most easily in the decline of industries that suddenly have become costly or inappropriate. The making of steel, for example, requires a high expenditure of energy, and energy has ceased to be cheap so steel itself has become expensive and demand for it has fallen. We may suppose that demand will revive, but if it is to do so energy must once again become relatively cheap. If this does not happen in the near future, by the time it does—if it does—steel will have been replaced by alternatives in many uses. These are being developed rapidly, principally as plastics, carbon fibre materials, and ceramics. It would be unwise, therefore, to plan for the future on an assumption that demand for steel will revive strongly and for any length of time. The motor industry, shipbuilding, and many other of the older industries are in a similar plight.

Will energy ever again be cheap? Quite probably it will, and the 'energy crisis' is one current concern whose passing away we may predict with some confidence. It will have little effect on other aspects of the future, however, because by the time it passes away the important changes related to it will have been made. It will pass away because it does not really exist. There is no 'energy crisis'. The crisis arises because we became heavily dependent on imported oil, and the price of oil rose. It is an economic crisis—and no less important for that—but not one related to energy as such, or even to fuels. There is no shortage of energy and my guess is that in years to come we will rely mainly on nuclear power, based on the breeder reactor and the full cycling of fuels, augmented by coal as a kind of 'fuel of last resort'. Solar, wind, wave and tidal sources of power may play a minor role, but they are unlikely to be important. This is because the time it will take to develop them is too long for our purposes and their capital cost is similar to, or higher than, that of their more conventional rivals. By the time they are available they will not be needed, although it is sensible to continue their development as an insurance and for such local or specialist roles they may fill. Immediately, the high price for all forms of energy has encouraged conservation in industry and is likely to do so among domestic users, while for other reasons it seems probable that in the future each unit of wealth that is generated in the presently industrialised nations will require a much smaller energy expenditure. In the longer term fusion power is likely to replace all other sources of energy, and it may be replacing them by about the middle of the next century. When it does, energy will be cheap and plentiful again, and the ultimate energy crisis will threaten, for unless it is used sparingly, eventually there is a danger of disturbing the thermal balance of the planet by the release of waste heat into the atmosphere.

The 'population explosion' is another matter for concern whose passing away we can predict, for we know much more now than we did a few

years ago about the conditions that must be supplied if the growth of population is to be curtailed, and those conditions are being supplied. Already world population size shows signs of stabilising and the present projections suggest it will complete the process by about the middle of the next century, at a total of between nine and thirteen billion persons. This is a gobal total, of course, and it may well conceal tragedies within particular countries whose rate of population growth continues to outpace the ability of their economies to supply education, employment and services.

The real change that is taking place in the world now is merely obscured by immediate economic difficulties and the temporarily high price of energy. It may have been precipitated by them, but without them it would have occurred anyway.

The economies of many Third World countries are shifting from a primary to a secondary level. They are ceasing to consist only or even mainly of wealth generated by the production and export of raw materials and are beginning to derive increasing proportions of their wealth from the processing of those materials into manufactured goods. In other words, they are starting to assume a role in the world economy that until now has been filled by the countries of Europe, North America and, to a lesser extent, Australasia. The case of Japan illustrates the point. It made the transition from a primary to a secondary economy recently and today Japanese products compete very successfully indeed in the home markets of the traditionally industrial nations. South Korea, Brazil, India and the People's Republic of China are or soon will be major industrial powers and their transition will be followed by similar transitions in Nigeria, many Arab countries, and then others. Such tran sitions are likely to succeed because conditions in the newly industrialising countries are more highly favourable to the growth of manufacturing than they are in the older, more constrained countries, and we may expect that in future a proportion of the manufactured goods which we buy will be imported from such sources. Today there are many people who drive Japanese cars. A generation from now the Japanese cars will be joined by Brazilian and Korean cars. The change will help to distribute wealth more evenly throughout the world, and we should welcome it on that ground, but there are other advantages as well, to the north as well as to the south. Manufacturing will tend to concentrate in regions that are closer to the sources of raw materials, which is sensible. It will allow the older industrial regions to recover from the environmental degradation caused by rapid industrialisation in the past, but because we understand now the risks attendant upon industrialisation it does not follow that newly industrialising countries will suffer similar degradation. They may choose to evade the more extreme environmental regulations that are imposed most severely in the United States, but it is doubtful whether these achieve any significant environmental advantage. Finally, the change will release workers in the older countries from occupations they have begun to find onerous.

Within the old industrial countries, then, the economic emphasis will shift away from traditional forms of manufacturing. This is not to say there will be no manufacturing at all, of course. No doubt Britain will still be producing cars—rather different from the cars of today—a century from now, but it will produce relatively fewer of them and economically they will be much less important. The transition in Britain from a primary to a secondary economy meant that manufacturing came to provide more employment and to generate more wealth than mining or farming did, but it did not mean that mining and farming ceased altogether. It is fashionable, and probably correct, to suppose that many tasks in manufacturing will be performed by machines and that factories will employ few humans, and perhaps none on the factory floor itself for any task other than routine inspection and maintenance of the operating plant. Popularly this is taken to imply a great increase in unemployment. I believe this view is mistaken, but before considering it I would like to mention other implications, which may prove more important in the long term.

If we become less dependent on manufacturing, our economy will become less dependent on the consumption of manufactured goods. It will be much less important for people to buy goods and, once they have bought them, to renew them at frequent intervals. Indeed, if we suppose that a period of concern over resources has encouraged thrift on a national scale, then the system of values obtaining a century from now may require goods to last for long periods. This will mean that the supply of an equivalent quantity of goods will demand fewer resources than it does today. Automation will bring a further saving in energy. Much of the energy consumed in manufacturing is used to maintain a habitable environment for human workers. Machines can operate at temperatures much closer to the ambient, so that automated factories require little heating or cooling. If goods are made to last, their design will change less frequently. This will affect the outward appearance of the human environment and will feed back into the system of values. We are accustomed to the frequent changes in appearance that affect most goods. Indeed, we can date an old movie by the style of the cars in the streets. Our great-grandchildren will find this strange. For them the appearance of the world will be more constant. Such a change is obvious and inevitable, since a major purpose in changing designs is to render existing models 'old fashioned' and so to ensure their renewal. People will have to find new ways to 'keep up with the Jones's'. The 'conserving society' so beloved of environmentalists may or may not be desirable, but there is good reason to suppose it to be inevitable.

Although our consumption of resources in recent years has been unusually profligate, the shift described here is something entirely new in our experience. We like to extol the thrift of our forefathers, and they were thrifty compared to our recent behaviour, but the difference is quantitative rather than qualitative. Many people were thrifty because they were too poor to be anything else: in the future the constraint on

consumption will owe nothing to poverty. In respect of the transition from an economy based on the production of raw materials to one based on manufacturing, this transition brought no economy in the use of primary goods. How could it? Food must be eaten. If it is not people will go hungry and the food will rot. That is not thrift. While manufacturing industry is expanding the consumption of fuels and minerals must increase rather than decrease. True thrift will become possible only as the economic emphasis moves away from manufacturing altogether. Today, of course, many people are employed in the tertiary, or service sector, but the change from secondary to tertiary is insufficient to promote thrift. True, the service industries consume few resources directly, apart from energy, but they exist to promote the activities of the primary and secondary sectors and so must be counted with them.

All this is very well, but if the decline in the importance of manufacturing, and its automation, create widespread and permanent unemployment the 'conserving society' may not be a very happy society. The fear of unemployment would be real if we were to suppose that the decline in manufacturing were not to be accompanied—perhaps with a short time lag—by an expansion elsewhere. Although the supposition informs many commentaries on the immediate future, quite clearly it is absurd. Imagine the reaction of an eighteenth century farm worker to the news that one day most of the work on farms would be done by machines and that agriculture would employ less than three per cent of the working population. Our farm worker might count himself fortunate that he would not live to see such hard times, but we know he would be wrong. We omitted to tell him that those workers, and many more beside, would be absorbed into better paid occupations in industry and that standards of living would rise beyond his wildest dreams. Had we asked him for his reaction to the prospect of holidays on the Mediterranean coast, three square meals a day, a home of his own, adequate clothing, medical care, and education to university level for his children, it might have been different—had he believed us. The fact is that no new technology has ever created permanent unemployment, and the fact that the investment it requires must be supplied by an economy buoyant enough to provide markets for its products, makes it rather unlikely that it could do so. In fact, we can see already the areas that are beginning to expand to provide the employment that will be needed.

In 1981, in the depth of the worst recession Britain has seen since the 1930s, sales of home computers are growing so rapidly that manufacturers are hard pressed to keep up with the demand. It is probable that long before the end of the century as many homes will have microcomputers as have television receivers today. At the same time, similar computers are being installed in small businesses, and the sales of hardware—which is cheap and becoming cheaper—are accompanied by sales of software—that is expensive and likely to remain so. Ironically, the production of software is a highly labour intensive business, and it is very profitable indeed. In the United States today the 'information industries'

employ almost half of the national work force. The industry of the future is the creation, processing and dissemination of information. It will generate huge amounts of wealth and provide ample employment, and it will consume very modest amounts of material resources and energy. Most probably it will continue to expand until about the middle of the next century. After that it will decline.

A graph of economic activity in the industrial nations over the centuries shows a series of cycles, each lasting for about fifty years and each dominated by a single group of industries. At the moment we are entering a decline following a rise that began shortly before the Second World War, from a depression that followed a previous peak in about the 1880s. Our own growth in recent years has been dominated by the motor industry. Its markets have approached saturation and its goods have become expensive both to buy and to operate. Its continued decline is inevitable and the next phase of rapid growth will be dominated by the information industries. They, too, will decline and be replaced by something else. It is our location on the graph that makes it possible for us to guess in an informed way about the future up to about 2050. The future beyond that is hidden completely, for it will be based on technologies that have not yet been devised. We can no more predict them than we could have predicted the growth of the motor industry in, say, 1881.

We cannot know how people who have not yet been born will view themselves and their world, but we can say something about the opportunities that will be open to them. For most of them, 'home' will assume a new meaning and importance. Within the next hundred years most of our housing stock will be renewed. It will have to be, because more and more buildings will become inconvenient and expensive to maintain. The more solid of them, most of which were built before about 1920, will be old and many will be structurally unsound. The newer houses were not designed for long life. The buildings which replace them will be insulated to high standards and they will incorporate technological devices that will more or less automate them: the environmental conditions indoors will be selected by the occupants, probably room by room, and then maintained automatically with no further intervention. They will be very comfortable, but they will be much more than that. The developments that will take place in communications will bring entertainment and information into homes on a scale we may find it difficult to imagine. In addition to the television fare with which we are familiar it will be possible to view at will any film or video recording ever made. Entirely new visual arts will exploit the electronic media. Private individuals may have access to data stored on satellites that will be so abundant as to dwarf the largest of the world's libraries. Much educational material will be disseminated electronically, and the school may become a community building, used throughout the day and evening by people of all ages. The fact that one lives on a remote island will no longer prevent one from studying, say, classical Chinese literature, to degree level. Nor will the domestic electronics cast the householder in an invariably passive role.

Computer games will become more and more interactive and while many will be of educational or vocational value—it will not be difficult to simulate the flying of an aircraft, for example, or the conduct of some kinds of scientific experiment—others will provide pure entertainment. Communication with others will be facilitated by video-telephones, and it will be possible to shop and even to vote and participate in political and social activities without leaving the house. The effect of all this will be to encourage people to spend much more time at home, while making the home a more intensely private place, but not an isolated one.

It will be possible for people to work at home, and to arrange their working hours to suit themselves.

Politically this may lead to a more dispersed kind of society and it may imply the dissolution of the centralised nation-state. At one end of the political hierarchy nations will be subsumed into larger federations, while at the other end local communities will enjoy a high degree of autonomy over matters that affect the daily lives of their citizens. Direct participatory democracy will become feasible.

Is it all fantasy? It may be, of course, for this is not a prediction. It is no more than a statement of what will be possible, based on trends that can be seen today and whose extrapolation does not lead to absurd conclusions, and it requires technologies that either exist or that can be predicted confidently. Such raw material is available to anyone. The trick lies in the mixing, and this can be done in other ways. It can lead to hideously tyrannical regimes, or grotesque mass poverty. It can lead to thermonuclear war—and a recovery from such war more rapid than most people might suppose. It can produce threats as well as promises. In the end, though, we must try to imagine a world that is possible, that people might choose, and that they might work, and vote, to achieve. We must trust, as we have good reason to trust, in the large fund of common sense and practicality on which our children and grandchildren will draw. Despite rumours to the contrary, over long periods of time—there are temporary aberrations—most people are quite sensible, and it is ordinary people, after all, who make history.

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[Michael Allaby has written, co-authored or edited about twenty books on farming, the world food situation, the countryside, natural history, and the future. He was one of the contributors to *A Blueprint for Survival*, published by *The Ecologist* in 1972. Subsequently, he wrote *Inventing Tomorrow* (Hodder and Stoughton 1976, Sphere (Abacus) 1977). In September 1981 The Macmillan Press will publish *The 21st Century*, a collection of essays about the future which he has edited. At present Michael Allaby is compiling *The Oxford Dictionary of Natural History*, writing a book about the human and natural history of a river, and collaborating with J. E. Lovelock FRS in a book called *The Great Extinction*, which deals with the major extinction of, among many others, the dinosaurs, 65 million years ago.]

# THE PORTRAIT OF NATHAN FIELD

## by Sheila Huftel

I HAVE always wanted to know more of Nathan Field because of his portrait at Dulwich. It is enigmatic and reserved, but spontaneous; he seems about to speak. It has the delicacy and fine drawing of a Nicholas Hilliard miniature, even to the translucent skin that David Piper has described as 'lit by a candle from within'.[1] But the portrait is not a miniature, and the painter is unknown. Field was probably in his early or mid-twenties when it was painted. The eyes are wary but summoning. It is an actor's or a poet's likeness. The skill with which the single earring is chosen illustrates both Field's skill and the artist's in its simplicity and telling effect. On that alone one would suppose him to have been a fine and fine-judging actor. Also the highlight on the silk embroidered shirt matches the painter's skill to the actor's. Nothing is allowed to distract from the expressive face. The picture is romantic in the same way as Hilliard's miniature of 'An Unknown Youth Among White Roses.' But Field's portrait is more dramatic; the unease in his face reflects the precarious existence of a Jacobean actor, and it seems to have a built-in contradiction of immediacy and reserve.

At the Dulwich Gallery this picture hangs beside Burbage's, once thought to have been a self-portrait. Where Field's face is full of apprehension and a quick intelligence; Burbage's is full of thought. The features are firm, the eyes sad. He has a plain of a forehead. There is nothing that face could not imagine; a page for Shakespeare to write upon. There is an eternity about Burbage, where there is nothing static about Field, nothing passive. His eyes must have held attention. They still do.

Field's career is mainly bare boards and conjecture. As an actor his contemporaries ranked him with Burbage, and Field was a minor Jacobean dramatist. There is a chameleon quality about him, the actor in him perhaps, and his verse belongs as much to his time as his face. In 'Amends for Ladies,' about 1611, there is this lyric and the tone and feeling give the man.

> Rise, Lady Mistresse, rise
> The night has tedious beene,
> No sleepe hath fallen into my eyes,
> Nor slumber made me sinne.
> Is not she a Saint then say,
> Thoughts of whom keepes sinne away?
> Rise Madam, rise and give me light,
> Whom darknesse still will cover,
> And ignorance darker than night,
> Till thou smile on thy lover;
> All want day till thy beauty rise,
> For the gray morne breakes from thine eyes.

Nathan Field was baptised at St. Giles, Cripplegate on 17 October, 1587; the youngest son of the Rev. John Field, an ardent Puritan divine

who, for his faith, seemed to spend almost as many years in prison as out of it. The family was an old and distinguished one; with a long heritage of churchmen, writers, graduates of Oxford and Cambridge, and an astronomer in John Field of Ardsley in Yorkshire. Nathan Field did not escape this heritage. In many ways, he was his father's son, although John Field would have deplored his profession. Naturally Field attacked the theatre. It was common form that when a gallery collapsed at a bear pit in Paris Garden, it was a spur to the faithful and seen as a judgment of God. John Field emphasised this in a fiery pamphlet and some sparks fell on stage plays. He died in 1588, before Nathan was a year old.

In 1600 when Nathan was a pupil at St. Paul's Grammar school, he was impressed to be one of the Children of the Chapel Royal. He was seized under a patent granted by Queen Elizabeth to Nathaniel Giles, the Chapel master, to furnish the Choir of the Chapel Royal. Even at this distance he seems a strange partner for Henry Evans, his deputy who had acquired Blackfriars Theatre, and James Robinson. There were probably about twenty boys in the company, among them Salathiel Pavy; the subject of Ben Jonson's moving epitaph that evokes the child actors. Jonson used to help Field with his Latin, and stayed a friend throughout his life. Field probably had a leading role when the children played *Cynthia's Revels* at Court in 1601.

The Queen's illness and her death in 1603 closed the theatres. They were closed again in April on account of the plague. But the main hazard to the children's company was the playwrights. Jonson, Chapman, Marston and Daniel saw the company as their way to freedom and seized the opportunity to write as they chose. The children were unlikely to be gaoled; but 'Philotas,' 'Eastward Ho', and particularly Chapman's Byron plays roused the displeasure of the king. This put the company rather in the position of a newspaper that is banned under one title, and begins again next day under another. In brief summary: Children of the Chapel at Blackfriars in 1600 became Children of the Revels to the Queen in February 1604; the Children of the Revels 1605; and the Children of the Blackfriars about 1606. Field stayed with the company through its chequered changes until 1613 when it merged with one of Henslowe's companies, the *Lady Elizabeth's Men.*

The children were established at Whitefriars Theatre where in 1609 Field played in Jonson's *Epicoene.* At Whitefriars, Field's plays *A Woman is a Weather-cocke* and *Amends for Ladies* were acted. He was a rip-roaring writer of Jacobean comedies, and his introduction to *Weather-cocke* shows a pleasing, shrugging, self-deprecating sense of humour. 'Reader, the Sale-man swears you'll take it very ill, if I say not somewhat to you too. Introth, you are a stranger to me; why would I Write to you? you never writ to me, nor I think will not answer my Epistle. I send a Comedie to you here, as good as I could then make. . .'

The play begins with Scudmore reading a letter from Bellafront, spacious and fresh with Elizabethan imagery. The touch of lyricism in this play, to my mind, sets it above *Amends for Ladies.* Scudmore's

description of Bellafront is pure pastoral: 'The singing birds were in contention/Which should light nearest her.' Field cannot sustain it, but the odd lines grace the play. It begins in pure joy; but Bellafront is to be married to a lord that morning. The rest is taken up with Nevill's attempts to cross the marriage and ensure that his friend Scudmore wins Bellafront. He is a lively plot-spinner. Field keeps ever a few steps ahead of his audience, and the stage whirls with contemporary Londoners, as well as with echoes of plays past. Kate, Bellafront's sister, finds herself in Hero's situation in *Much Ado About Nothing;* but Strange comes out of it better than Claudio by refusing to believe the slander and avenging it. Sir Abraham Ninny satirises the new knights made by James I and, like many of Field's characters, would be equally at home in Jonson. The knight is endearing. He is a kind, gentle creation. The centuries might have softened our view of him, but Field has a way of redeeming foolish knights.

The hallmark of Field's plays is the actor in him. The playwright becomes the actor and there are actor's asides to share with the audience. He writes to hold attention, and never trusts the attention of an audience that he cannot seize. Even for a Jacobean dramatist he is restless; devising a multiplicity of plots and disguises and drawing vivid, actable characters. The plays are tongue-in-cheek: both playwright and audience enjoy the trick of it. He is a kind of theatrical conjurer and produces a sudden tale of murder.

Comparatively little happens in *A Woman is a Weather-cocke* once it is set beside *Amends for Ladies*. It is brisk and bawdy. A maze of a play with three main plots: the maid's; the wife's; and the widow's, and numberless sub-plots of ever-changing direction. In a word it is a box of tricks written under the heady influence of Jonson. Again Field is at his best with a simple knight. Lord Fee-simple cannot look at a sword without swooning. This is due to a faulty upbringing. He was taught to 'write and read, and speak languages, and such base qualities fit for none but Gentlemen.' Because of his innocence Fee-simple stays engaging. In a tavern scene he puts the roaring boys to flight, and his enthusiasm is boundless: '. . . if you love me, let's go break windows somewhere.'

It is cold to judge this play on the page. Imagine an audience rising to its contemporary references and responding to the turns of plot. Field's audience is as vital to this play as its dialogue.

He enjoyed playwriting. The theatre was home to him; Blackfriars was his world and he a vivid reporter. It must be said at once that he has not the dexterity and weight of Jonson; the simple-hearted lyricism of Dekker; nor the 'Dutch' realism of Heywood. Jonson has vitality where Field is merely busy. Dekker and Heywood have the detail and freshness of good watercolours. Field has nothing to equal the early morning light of *The Shoemaker's Holiday;* or the calm simplicity of *A Woman Killed With Kindness*. The title in particular belongs to Heywood. Dekker and Heywood seem to draw straight from life, where Field, perhaps, sees life through the theatre, just as ardent readers see it through books. There seems little affection between Field and his characters. A warmth is

lacking.

The second Queen's Revels company merged with Henslowe's Lady Elizabeth's Men in 1613; but both companies kept their individuality. Field worked for Henslowe. In October 1614 he played John Littlewit in *Bartholomew Fair* and Jonson praised him in the same breath as Burbage. Field joined the King's Men, Shakespeare's company, about 1617 as an actor and writer.

Bridges-Adams has an enviable gift of setting his reader in the midst of the Elizabethan actors. He begins with detail. Space was necessary to the Elizabethan; 'in full fig he needed four feet of elbow room; he could not wear his clothes without style and neither could the actor who bought them from him at second-hand.'[2] This was proved in the National Theatre's late Elizabethan production of *As You Like It* in 1979. Peter J. Hall's costumes were like Hilliard's miraculously brought to life.

In *The Irresistible Theatre* it might be a trick of the light or a conjuring line; but the actors surge round you. Bridges-Adams writes of a modern actor playing Tamburlaine, and wondering what Alleyn had, that he lacks. 'Alleyn, could we go by his parts, was a born virtuoso—a one-man band.'[3] Or Burbage: 'He was at his happiest in a confraternity of artists: if he had not some natural affinity with Shakespeace that partnership would not have held as it did.'[4] It is so reasonable, so imaginatively deduced. To turn to Richard Flecknoe's *A Short Discourse of the English Stage,* circa 1660, is to make Burbage live indeed.

> It was the happiness of the Actors of those times to have such Poets as these to instruct them, and write for them; and no less of those poets to have such docile and excellent Actors to Act their Playes, as a Field and Burbidge; of whom we may say, that he was a delightful Proteus, so wholly transforming himself into his Part, and putting off himself with his Cloathes, as he never . . . assum'd himself again until the Play was done. . . He had all the parts of an excellent Orator, (animating his words with speaking, and Speech with Action) his Auditors being never more delighted than when he spoke, nor more sorry than when he held his peace.

Field shared leads with Burbage, and played in *The Loyal Subject, The Queen of Corinth, The Knight of Malta, The Mad Lover,* and *Thierry and Theodoret.* He collaborated with Fletcher and Massinger in *The Jeweller of Amsterdam, The Knight of Malta* and *The Queen of Corinth;* and with Fletcher in *Thierry and Theodoret,* as well as with Massinger in *The Fatal Dowry.* On 27 March, 1619, Field is named seventh in a list including Heminges, Burbage and Condell in the Signet Bill before the new Letters Patent were issued that ensured the company's right to act in the Blackfriars. Field was described as a housekeeper in the suit of Witter vs. Heminges and Condell, on 28 April, 1619. Baldwin suggests that he probably came into Shakespeare's share. In so much of Field's life, he is best seen by colourful reflection. Another bright thread; he is listed among 'the Principal Actors in all these Playes' in the First Folio. The last record of him with the King's Men is that he was fourth to receive a new livery.

Field's timing is ever a shade late. He missed the golden age of the Chapel Royal, joined the King's Men after Shakespeare's death, and in

acting his was a silver age. He was a Jacobean rather than an Elizabethan: more fine-drawn and less robust than Burbage or Alleyn, a flaming torch rather than a blazing fire. Bridges-Adams defines him as 'Fiery and graceful, he mirrors the theatre of his day, seeming to tell us how it felt to be a favoured leading juvenile in times when the battle of security had been won."[7] Bartholomew Cokes, in Johnson's *Bartholomew Fair*, may ask the puppet-master: 'Which is your best actor, your Field?' But one would cast him for Benedick or Romeo rather than for Hamlet or Macbeth. Somehow a university of spirit had died.

And yet Field's greatest role was Chapman's Bussy D'Ambois. At a glance one would cast an oak of an actor for Bussy; an Alleyn, a Burbage, an Olivier. But Field 'whose action first did give it name' is praised in the 1641 prologue. He made the part his own. His success was due to his background. From the age of thirteen he had been trained as an Elizabethan actor, in that his teachers were training him for that theatre. Field's plays prove how completely his theatrical training was ingrained. In fact, although Bussy is described in lightning, he does not himself storm. Field did not need to be an oak; but strong, flexible, rapier-swift and, above all, theatrical.

In 1616 the Puritan attack on the stage, that was never quiet, cited Field. The Rev. Thomas Sutton, the new minister at St. Mary Overy (now Southwark Cathedral) attacked the actors. Field replied and his heritage was never stronger in him: centuries of divines speak through him in the style of this letter, and the compassion in it tells of good breeding. He was never more John Field's son than now. His father would have written in much the same way, but for the Puritans.

> Beare witness with me, O my Conscience, and reward me, O Lord, according to the truth of my lipps, how I love the Sanctuary of my God and worship towards his holy alter; how I have, according to my poore talent, indeavoured to study Christ and make sure my election; how I reverence the feete of those that bring glad tidings of the Gospell, and that I beare in my soule the badge of a Christian practise to live the lief of the faithfull, wish to dye the death of the righteous, and hope to meete my Saviour in the cloudes. . . Christ never sought the strayed sheepe in that manner; he never cursed it with acclamacion or sent a barking dogg to fetch it home, but gently brought it uppon his owne shoulders. The widdowe never serched for her lost groate with spleene and impatience, but gently swept her house and founde it. If it be sinfull to lay stumbling blockes in the way of the blind, if it be cruelty to bruse the broken-reede, if children are to be fedd with milk and not strong meate, let God and his working tell yow whether yow have not sinned in hindering the simpleness of our soules from the suckicis of your better doctrine by laying in their wayes your extravagant and unnecessary passions. . .[8]

Field's private life is shadowy and suitably romantic. Between 5 and 15 June, 1619, Sir William Trumbull wrote to James Hay. 'I am told that he (The Earl of Argyll) was privy to the payment of 15 or 16 poundes sterling to one of your lordship's Trayne called Wisdome for the noursing of a child which the world says is daughter to my lady (Argyll) and N(at) Feild the player.' It reads like an extract from Aubrey's *Brief Lives*.

It is supposed that Field died in 1619. After that year, his name no longer appears in the cast lists of the King's Men. In August 1619 John

Rice seems to have taken Field's place in the company. On 2 August, 1620, Field's sister, Dorcas Field Rice, was commissioned administrator of the estate of 'Nathan Feild late of the parish of Saint Giles in the Fields'.[7]

To return to Field's portrait; the theatricality of his plays, and the letter to the Rev. Thomas Sutton. They show a strange dualism in the man: a combination of his heritage and his education. I think the turn his life took that day in 1600 when he was seized for the company of Children of the Chapel Royal grafted a player on to one of old religious stock, the man who wrote the letter. Moreover both sides weigh equally and this, perhaps, could account for the fascination and reserve of the portrait. The divine's son who was an accomplished actor, and wrote plays like a theatrical pyrotechnist. The mind of the man is reflected in the portrait and there is no danger of plucking out the heart of its mystery.

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['The Portrait of Nathan Field' is from a forthcoming book, *Portrait and the Player.* Sheila Huftel's first book was *Arthur Miller: The Burning Glass.* She is working on *A Packet of Letters,* an anthology of theatre letters, Garrick—Olivier; and *Playgoing with Leigh Hunt,* a collection of Leigh Hunt's dramatic criticism. She has written about theatre for *The Scotsman,* was a critic and correspondent for *The Stage,* and is a member of the Critics' Circle.]

# QUARTERLY FILM REVIEW

## by James Morton

IT seems unkind to say the best thing about the new Martin Scorsese film, *Raging Bull,* is the credit sequence but the truth is that it is magnificent. Robert de Niro in a major performance as the boxer Jake La Motta is seen in slow motion warming up in his corner before a contest. The sound track is the *Intermezzo* from *Cavallieria Rusticana.* The colour is a grainy blue with white captions and one wishes it would go on for another few minutes. After that the next half hour is something of a disappointment. Stanislavsky has a great deal to answer for his innovation of method acting. This is method at its most tireseome. The dialogue is conducted *sotto voce* in mumbled Brooklynese and really needs subtitles.

But just as the yawns are developing De Niro takes the picture by the scruff of the neck and us with it. La Motta was the world middleweight boxing champion in the '40s until he lost his title in a bloodbath to Sugar Ray Robinson. The boxing sequences form the middle part of the film and stay with La Motta from the time he is a contender to his final eclipse at Robinson's hands. Framing the action is a prologue with La Motta rehearsing a cabaret act in a New York night-club and after the boxing is La Motta's decline and fall and partial rehabilitation after the break up of his marriage and his imprisonment on a morals charge. The story itself rather falls apart after La Motta retires from the ring. Just before his final contests he has become obsessively jealous of his wife, the lovely and sexually aware Cathy Moriaty. He places her in the care of his brother Joe (Joe Pesci). The poor girl seems to do nothing wrong but De Niro, more and more unstable and more and more violent, eventually becomes convinced that she has slept with Joe.

There is a wonderful sequence with De Niro fiddling with a television set and cross examining his brother. Just a chance remark, made quite innocently, does for Joe and ultimately for De Niro. Later there is an opportunity for a reconciliation between the brothers and again there is a scene of stunning ability with De Niro trying to make up his mind to go into a telephone booth and make a telephone call. You can see his brain working as he weighs up the pros and cons and ultimately fluffs the matter. But what seems extraordinary is that with the beating by Robinson the violence goes out of La Motta. At least so far as the film is concerned.

What we do see is a scene of domestic bliss around a Florida swimming pool with a La Motta already putting on weight. By this time he has invested in a night club where he does a stand-up comedian act. He becomes involved with under-age prostitution and is given a prison sentence. But before that his wife has met him at the club carpark and has said she's off. And not a finger laid for a good twenty minutes. It does seem a bit odd. The film ends with a reprise of La Motta rehearsing

Budd Schulberg's 'I cudda bin a contender' speech from *On the Waterfront.*

It is the lack of continuity which eventually throws the film into some disarray. We see La Motta's retirement from the ring. We see him in a position of some substance and then all his friends and advisers have gone with his arrest. Yet he must somehow have retained them to enable him to start up the ladder again. Why are there all these gaps? That said, the acting is superb. De Niro allowed himself to put on 4 stone to play La Motta gone to seed and his nomination for an Academy Award is well deserved. By the time this piece appears he may well have won one. If he does not, it will have been an exceptional piece of acting which has beaten him.

The Franco-Argentinian feminist director, Nelly Kaplan, has had a short season of her films shown at the Scala Cinema and with luck this will lead to better distribution of her work. She is rather unkindly thought of as a soft-core porn film maker largely on the basis that her film *Nea* was dreadfully dubbed in England and entitled *A Young Emanuelle* to help it climb on that good lady's back. Her other and better film to be distributed in England, *La Fiancée du Pirate,* was shown as *Dirty Mary.* Worse was to befall it in that the National Film Theatre included it in a season of 'Gay' films. Nothing could have been further from Ms Kaplan's intentions. Both these films were on show together with *Papa les Petits Bateaux* and *Charles et Lucie,* her latest. Both *Fiancée du Pirate* and *Nea* have stood up well but *Papa Les Petits Bateaux* which was made in 1971 and divides the other films is a sad disappointment. Sheila White is a Betty Boop character who is captured by some incompetents led by Michel Bouquet. The trouble with the film is that she outwits them at every hand's turn. There is never any question but that she can outwit them at will and as a result the film loses much of its drive. Bouquet is, as always, admirable in the tired businessman attitude he has worn through so many films but he can't really do too much with the false beards and spectacles he is obliged to don. Sydney Chaplin is also in attendance, but the film never really gets going. There are some neat touches but whereas *Fiancée du Pirate* in particular was in a way both an original and a film which showed that Ms Kaplan's ten year stint as assistant to Bunuel had been well spent, this film seems something of a waste of both time and money. On the other hand *Charles et Lucie,* the tired warm-up act for Piaf, who win a lottery and then head for the south of France are a different pair altogether. The film is much less mocking of the bourgoisie than her other film. Sidelong looks occur throughout the film but the observation is much kinder. The film is said to be doing business second only to *Cage aux Folles* in the States but it still awaits a distributor here.

*The Long Good Friday,* made on a tight budget and directed by John Mackenzie, has also had distribution problems. Originally Lord Grade bought it to be shown in a cut version for television, but thanks to good notices at the London Film Festival it was rescued, bought for £700,000

and is now having a partial release. In essence it is a souped-up TV thriller, well made and with much more violence than TV would allow. Bob Hoskins is the mobster who has cleaned up London and ruled it for the last decade. Whilst trying to make a long term deal with the Americans he quite innocently falls foul of the IRA. Suddenly his empire literally blows up in his face. We have been conditioned by television to almost cinema *verité* in our crime films and so a London where there is only one detective (and that one bent) to deal with two explosions, one stabbing, six kidnappings and a mutilation all on Good Friday does require the suspension of disbelief. Added to that, Hoskins plays the villain in an Alf Garnet tone of voice. Indeed, in his final ranting against Eddie Constantine, the American hood who sensibly thinks that London is too violent for him and his money, it could be Warren Mitchell speaking Johnny Speight's dialogue. Added to Hoskins' troubles is the fact that he looks a ringer for Mick McManus, the wrestler. He is also exceptionally dumb. The brains behind the operation are Helen Mirren who seems to have been to Benenden but opted for the penthouse suite and the yacht moored by the Tower of London. Whatever its flaws this is a good fast moving thriller in the *film noir* tradition. It stands up well to *Gumshoe* and Hodges' *Get Carter,* the other British *film noir,* and that is saying something.

Much less enjoyable, much more 'significant', much more pretentious but ultimately by reason of its extreme length much more watchable and lasting is Andrei Tarkovsky's *Stalker,* a film where the eponymous hero and mystic takes a Writer and a Scientist into a forbidden zone guarded by wire and armoured cars towards a room where one's wishes can be fulfilled. The journey is beset by traps both real and imaginary. Seemingly only Alexander Kaidanovsky, as the Stalker, can fully appreciate them; indeed, only he may be able to see them but at any rate there is a good deal of wallowing in muddy waters. Tarkovsky's earlier films, *Mirror* and *Alexei Rublev,* have both been obscure and *Stalker* certainly is that. The film, like *Raging Bull,* has three distinct parts; before the journey, where the Stalker prepares for the journey, much to the displeasure and fear of his wife; this is filmed in green. The journey filmed in techni color and the return, again in green. At the centre of the journey is the room which when encountered is treated with disdain by both the Writer and the Scientist. Only the Stalker is left with any illusions and he is cruelly mocked for these by his companions. In the third part his wife offers to make the journey again with him but he refuses. If she cannot find happiness in her wish asked for in the room what can be left? It is as if the Room stands for Pandora's box. Only hope remains. Tarkovsky goes in a great deal for the shots of backs of heads and feet. He never seems to make do with a frame if a 100 feet can be used. Nevertheless it is perhaps the bleakness of contemplating a bald head for two minutes which adds power to the film and one's feelings.

# LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

## PRESIDENT REAGAN'S EARLY LIFE

*My Early Life, or Where's the Rest of Me.* Ronald Reagan with Richard G. Hubler. Sidgwick & Jackson. £7.95.

This book first appeared in the U.S. in 1965, two years before its principal author became Governor of California. Its title there was 'Where's the rest of me?', from his famous line in his best-known film, *King's Row,* after an unfriendly doctor has, without cause, amputated both his legs. At the time it was written, Mr. Reagan had ceased to be an actor, and ceased to be active in the Screen Actors' Guild. He was by that time engaged on what he calls the rubber-chicken banquet trail, spreading the message of private enterprise and freedom in an open society. 'For me, I think that service is to continue accepting speaking engagements, in an effort to make people aware of the danger to freedom in a vast permanent government structure so big and complex it virtually entraps Presidents and legislators.' It was of course that activity that led him into active Republican politics, and in the end to the White House.

This story is, in fact, an up-to-date version of 'log cabin to White House'. Though not born in the poverty that marked Lincoln's birth, Reagan was born very near the wrong side of the tracks. His father, who liked his alcoholic refreshment, was unemployed in the Depression; the son, like his elder brother, worked his way through an undistinguished Fundamentalist college, Eureka in Illinois, where his chief interest was football; he counted himself lucky to get a job as a small-town radio sports reporter, which taught him to talk easily—and to invent and ad-lib when there were gaps to fill. His physical presence, agility and easy charm led to Hollywood in its expansionist age, and to some 50 films, in few of which was he especially distinguished. He became active in the Screen Actors' Guild, to serve it for six years as President, to become accustomed to its fierce union struggles—and in the hothouse atmosphere of the post-war world, to become aware of a Communist attempt to 'take over' the Hollywood unions. In this hectic apprenticeship, he lost his liberalism and became the close friend of those on the political right in Hollywood—James Stewart, Robert Taylor, Robert Montgomery, Clark Cable, to name a few. As presenter of General Electric's Sunday night television theatre he toured the Company's plants throughout the country, and had a second political apprenticeship.

The book does not go beyond this point. It is unpretentious, honest and—mildly—anecdotal, though it is ultra-discreet over the failure of the first marriage. There is no evidence here of a vast political ambition, or of any great depth of political reading. When he quotes the great names, he calls on the usual clichés of or from them. But he comes to his views from his own direct experience, he is straight, uncomplicated—and owing no debts to anyone. It is a heart-warming tale, and proof that the American dream is still alive, despite all the efforts of *The Washington Post* and the media in general to puncture it. It is good to know that a decent and sincere man can win the Presidency and seek to put that imprint upon it. The tone of the book is perhaps best caught by his final quotation—from Clark Gable, as it happens. 'The most important thing a man can know is that as he approaches his own door, someone on the other side is listening for the sound of his footsteps.'

ESMOND WRIGHT

## UNDERSTANDING ENGLAND

*English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit 1850-1980.* Martin J. Wiener. Cambridge University Press. £9.95.

The opening sentence of this unusual book, written by an American Professor of History at Rice University, Texas, goes as follows: 'The leading problem of modern British history is the explanation of economic decline.' In his concluding paragraph he writes: 'the causes of British economic decline' remain beyond the sole grasp of economists.'

In the intervening 170 pages the author develops his thesis that, although England invented the first industrial revolution, there has been a bias against industry and commerce, largely fostered by our Independent Public Schools. The historical and land-owning tradition, the moral and even religious criticism of money-making for its own sake has been part of our cultural tradition from Matthew Arnold and Ruskin to William Morris, J. B. Priestley and T. S. Eliot. The book is rich in reference to historians, statesmen of all parties as well as to men of letters. He quotes not only Arthur Bryant and Macaulay but Blatchford's socialist dream of *Merrie England* which sold more than a million copies. Mr. Wiener's reading of English history, novels, poetry and politics is undoubtedly wide, whether he is quoting from Dickens's novels or from speeches by Baldwin, Churchill or even Lord Rosebery. Here is a quotation from Rosebery when Chairman of the London County Council: 'Sixty years ago a great Englishman Cobbett called it (London) a wen. If it was a wen then, what is it now? A tumour, an elephantiasis sucking into its gorged system half the life and blood and bone of the rural districts.' What I wonder would he say now? I mention this quotation because it illustrates how in some ways this book is dated. Let me give another example. The author has already written a book entitled *The Political Thought of Graham Wallas* (incidentally one of my heroes) and in this current volume he refers to Graham Wallas' schooldays at Shrewsbury (1871-77) and his recollection that 'we had no laboratory of any kind and I never heard of any Shrewsbury boy receiving a science lesson.'

The present Headmaster of Westminster would certainly agree with Mr. Wiener, when he is talking about the Public Schools Commission and Taunton Commission of the last century. I immediately think today of my friend Oliver Roskill, who admittedly was at Oundle in the second decade of this century and was the first Industrial Consultant in this country, but he is only one of many brilliant scientists and technologists whose background was an English public school. The changes in English Education and the brilliance of English innovators, for example Sir Frank Whittle, Sir Barnes Wallis and many others, in every branch of science and technology have been startling. The English experience cannot be explained away by a series of quotations, however apt, from literary, historical and political writings. The author is on safer ground when he quotes Keynes' biographer as saying 'he was not a great friend of the profit motive; he found something unsatisfactory in the quest for gain as such.' Indeed Mr. Wiener goes further and in his own words says: 'despite their wide and often contentious differences, insiders like Marshall and Keynes, as well as outsiders like Hobson and R. H. Hawney, were all influenced by the tradition, descending from Mill, of attaching a low priority to the increase of production and the pursuit of material gain.' I cannot avoid the conclusion that Mr. Wiener's quotations are highly selective. It is as if he ransacked English literature and history to prove a point. This tends to make

an otherwise well-organised book unbalanced. This may be due to a sociological method that attempts to weigh the imponderables. It may also be due to an unconsciously humourless understanding of the strange ways of the English people. The phrase 'gentrification of the Victorian middle classes' is only one example.

But in conclusion I admit that Mr. Wiener has made a good case for stating that factors other than economic, whether capitalist or Marxist economics, have impeded the growth of manufacture and commerce in England. The loss of Empire is neither a sufficient nor rational explanation. Both political parties have tended to agree that 'the quality of life might be sacrificed in the pursuit of material prosperity.'

Mrs. Thatcher and Michael Foot may be faced with a cultural contest between the two faces of the middle class. Both political parties and any new one may find it difficult to reverse the pattern of the last century. E. F. Schumacher *Small is Beautiful* (1973), John Betjeman and the Ecologists and countless ordinary people are opposed both to a materialistic market economy and to a Marxist set-up. In a word, there is something deeper in English life than class consciousness and the 'gentrification of the industrialist.' Mr. Martin Wiener has paid us the compliment of a brilliant, painstaking analysis of English social life. Perhaps his penetrating and at times ruthless logic has just failed to unlock the secret path to understanding the English character. Perhaps a good answer can be found in the May number of the *Contemporary Review,* Sir Alec Smith, in a penetrating and brilliant article entitled *The Irrelevance of Politics,* states: 'We need an engineering-led spiritual re-awakening with a sensitivity to what is virtuous and worthwhile in life as well as what is technologically possible' and again 'Men and women need work, interesting satisfying work that gives them their dignity, work that is their culture.' Perhaps I should add that Sir Alec's background is not Public School but the Manchester Polytechnic.

KENNETH LINDSAY

## A MARXIST LITERARY MAP

*The Political Unconscious.* Frederick Jameson. Methuen. £10.95.

In *The Political Unconscious,* subtitled 'Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act', Frederick Jameson provides a comprehensive introduction to the method and practice of Marxist literary criticism. Where all intellectual activity is viewed as historically situated and class-based, literary analysis is essentially a social science, drawing much of its terminology from the other social sciences, sometimes directly but more often by analogy. Thus, the classical Freudian model of the unconscious mind is the exemplar for Dr. Jameson's proposal of a 'political unconscious': no neo-Freudian clinical suggestion is implied in which a moment of 'cure' might be possible, a moment when the dynamics of the unconscious would be brought to the surface and integrated in an 'active lucidity' about ourselves, our desires and behaviour. As psychoanalysts distinguish between their theoretical map of the mind and their therapeutic procedures, so the Marxian critic differentiates literary analysis from literary prescription. A writer and his readers share insights into aspects of their present, historically-determined experience, and can do no other if the continuity of human communication is to be sustained.

To propose narrow and schematic concepts of literary realism is no part of the enterprise: indeed, the abandonment of 'genre' criticism is foreseen as the natural result of reading novels and other texts in the light of wider, cross-disciplinary cultural debate. Some recently popular critical methods such as structuralism and its successors 'have known the re-emergence of meditation on hitherto marginalised types of discourse: legal language, the fragment, the anecdote, autobiography, Utopian discourse, the fantastic, novelistic description . . ., the preface, the scientific treatise, which are increasingly conceived as so many distinct generic modes.'

But the systematic undermining, from sheer exuberance, by modern writers of traditional literary forms does not lessen the central significance of narrative, and particularly of the fully developed novel. For it is through his readings of Conrad's, Balzac's and George Gissing's novels that Dr. Jameson most clearly brings out his theme of literature as a socially symbolic act. In interpreting their plots, devices and ideologies he looks at the nature of interpretation in general, assessing the importance and limitations of American, German and French aesthetic traditions. His textual analysis is close, detailed and at the same time broadly based. Its foundation is that history is a single, collective narrative linking past and present: that our comprehension of literature is determined by the concepts and categories we inherit from our cultural traditions: and that Marxist criticism alone reveals the unity of that continuous narrative. It reveals it, of course, in Marxist terms, presupposing the upward progress of collective society. But suppose that, having outgrown the ethics, ideologies and Utopias of former generations, we also outgrow this? Perhaps the dialectical process easily accommodates such a possibility.

BETTY ABEL

## A NEW LOOK AT SHELLEY

*Red Shelley.* Paul Foot. Sidgwick & Jackson. £12.95 hard back, £5.95 soft back.

Mr. Foot has entered himself in a classic race under the lead of a heavy handicap which he has placed squarely upon his own back by means of an introduction that is a kind of ghastly parody of Waugh *père et fils.* It begins, 'I share with Shelley a rotten education at University College, Oxford' and ends with a whimper in a puny anecdote about being denied access to an advertised Shelley exhibition at a stately home. He will automatically lose, or perhaps discard, a body of potential readers who are not all Tory pigs. Some others who persist may find themselves wondering if it is a good thing for Shelley's revolutionary views to be propounded by a commentator who presses such an impassioned imposition of his own opinions on history and 'our rotten society' —as if one were asking the missionary in the pot how he felt about cannibalism. Thus, where he writes, 'Shelley had a name for this "new aristocracy". He called them "capitalists" ', the reader will irresistibly infer that Shelley coined the word, and marvel thereat. Unfortunately, however, the Oxford Dictionary has it '1792. A Young. A gross evil of these direct imposts is, that of moneyed men, or capitalists, escaping all taxation.'

There are two ways of looking at Mr. Foot's book. Either, there is the way in which he claims Shelley as his own, or there is the way in which he makes a very real contribution to scholarship by rendering wonder-

fully clear, through explanation of the historical, political and social background, those poems, like *Queen Mab,* which have been thought difficult polemical, and even not really poetry. It is precisely the 'literary lady' kind of approach to Shelley, the extolling of the lyrical quality at the expense of the meaning and intellectual passion at the heart of nearly all his poetry, which Mr. Foot execrates, and to which he has supplied a powerful corrective. He proves absolutely his case that Shelley has suffered a literary emasculation. Although his book is not primarily a work of literary criticism, even so, where he expounds individual passages (and his arguments are excellently illustrated) this *is* literary criticism in its wider sense. It must be said that where the poetry is submerged in its weight of ideas, Mr. Foot has not succeeded in turning it into good poetry, however much he may endorse those ideas. He takes on Dr. Leavis and his well-known complaint that 'there is nothing grasped in the poetry' (of Shelley) and comes to the amusing and syllogistic conclusion that Leavis' aversion to Shelley was political in origin. This section of the book is recommended for lively discussion.

It is the volcanic fire in Shelley that Mr. Foot appreciates, and he demonstrates how he believed in violent revolution, but, nevertheless, was ambivalent about the forging of arms. He puts up a very convincing case, from various sources, that Shelley was always, to the end, an atheist, but his argument would have benefited from a longer exposition of his contention that in the later poems 'Shelley used the words of religion to convey quite irreligious ideas'. Shelley was not a socialist, 'in the sense of the ownership and planning of society's resources by its working people' but a leveller. He was a feminist, and his poetry inspired the women's suffrage movement. He still, Mr. Foot fervently believes, survives and deserves resurrection as an inspirational force against injustice and oppression.

MOLLY TIBBS

## AFOOT IN NEPAL

*Walking in the Clouds,* Judy Lomax. Hale. £8.95.

It was a peak day for Mrs. Lomax when, in the mid-'70s, her husband David was assigned by BBC TV to cover the Coronation of King Birendra of Nepal, the world's only Hindu monarch. They decided to spend their savings going together, with three children, five to eleven, to explore this remote Himalayan country and its multi-racial people. The outcome is a close-up account of strange customs, gained on two long treks afoot, the second by her and the children alone, aided by native guide and two porters.

In Kathmandu, the capital, where 30,000 people were said to live in each square mile, they found it was usual in some groups for a woman to have more than one husband or to welcome sexual advances from other males in the family; and for a man to have more than one wife and many mistresses. On Hindu-Nepalese feast days and festivals there was a ritual slaying of animals, which upset the Lomax juniors. An English pilot there training native pilots actually described a *puja* rite performed on a new plane for the King in which a buffalo was slain, its headless body borne thrice round the machine, its blood smeared on the fuselage to propitiate the gods. A grim spectacle for the family was the burning of five bodies at the ghats.

The first trek—into mountainous terrain below Annapurna—was over perilously steep rocky slopes and rickety plank bridges over chasms, with

five-year-old Megan wanting to walk all the way. One night-halt was at a dilapidated, windowless 'hotel' where Mrs. Lomax's sleeping place on the floor was so close to the open hearth that she dare not turn over. In the morning there was no breakfast, only a grudgingly-given cup of tea, though usually she found the natives hospitable and honest. She never saw a newspaper anywhere, only one or two radios, and the villagers seemed utterly remote from the central government.

The second trek, without David, was a hundred-mile one to the Helambu Sherpa, lama, yak region near the Tibetan border, sometimes through rain, snow, thunderstorms. In the Bonapati area she found family planning operative; in the previous two months 290 men had been vasectomied, 24,000 women were on the Pill! Among the Malemchi Pul Tamangs, of Tibetan origin, girls or widows could have babies, pre-marital affairs; if a woman went off with another man he paid a few pounds to her husband; a smaller fine was paid to him if the wife committed adultery without leaving him.

Mrs. Lomax takes us into the villagers' homes and lives, never overwriting for effect, risking being though formal at times. She is vivid on the Coronation, attended by Prince Charles, Lord Mountbatten, nineteen elephants draped with gold-painted red silk, patterns painted on their trunks, ears, toenails, the King in his pineapple-plumed crown. Photos taken on the trip illustrate a worthy achievement.

TREVOR ALLEN

## SHORTER REVIEWS

**The Isle, the Sun and the Crown** (Poets and Patrons Press. £3.95). In her long narrative epic, *The Isle, the Sea and the Crown,* Philippa Burrell has set herself a Herculean task. Three-hundred-and-twenty-six closely printed pages are not too many to contain the growth and development of the United Kingdom from the time when the British Isles were still part of the European mainland, to the country we know today.

After a Prologue, introducing such fantasy figures as a Sea-King and Chorus of the Waves, the main action begins, concentrating on the activities of sophisticated organisations as for instance the Trades' Unions, and familiar situations such as massive unemployment following World War I. The narrative progresses, interspersed with linking comments from the Chorus, to the more recent past culminating with the abdication of Edward VIII. Rather surprisingly, in view of the range of historical and political events, this episode receives the author's maximum attention. The dialogues between Mrs. Simpson and Edward VIII seem to break out of the confines of a sometimes stilted presentation and are by far the most convincing and compulsive part of the book. Taking an overall view, *The Isle, the Sea and the Crown* emerges as a notable tour-de-force in which verse mingles unobtrusively with prose. A specially composed music score by William Wordsworth is included.—(R.W.).

**In Durance Vile** (Hale. £7.95). John H. O. Brown, DCM, was a senior NCO in the Royal Artillery when captured during the retreat to Dunkirk in 1940. While a POW he was determined to become a British Secret Service Agent and made contact with MI6. For three years he was in the British prisoner of war camp at Blechhammer E/3 in Upper Silesia. There he made friends with the

German staff and also the Camp Commandant, Prince Waldemar Hohenloe, who was related to the British Royal Family. He was so successful in gaining the confidence of the German authorities that he went to Berlin, and in 1943 was put in charge of a so-called holiday camp for British POWs at Genshagen. This camp was in fact designed primarily as a recruiting base for the 'British Free Corps'. In Berlin he met such defectors as William Joyce (Lord Haw-Haw) and John Amery. By a miracle, John Brown escaped detection until near the end of the war, and he was able to avoid arrest. This volume is his own account of his experiences during these five years. He tells very little about his contacts with MI6 which appear to have been regular and two way. He was for example instructed to establish Amery's identity beyond doubt. He provided intelligence with a great deal of very valuable information during these years. At Blechhammer he became a close friend of Dr. John Borrie, the Camp Medical Officer. After John Brown's death in 1964, this account was found among his papers, and Dr. Borrie has now edited them. He describes the author as 'a man of great courage, character, integrity, with an ability, by his quiet personality to follow events to their logical conclusion.' It is a vivid story of constant danger, written in a modest and matter of fact way by a very genuine person.

**Avenue of the Righteous** (Dent. £7.95). On a hillside in Jerusalem 800 trees have been planted in the Avenue of the Righteous in honour of Christians who gave succour and protection to Jews during the Great War. In this volume, Peter Hellman tells the stories of four of the righteous and the people they helped. It is an impressive account of humanity at its highest, under great danger.

**Clouds over the Sun** (Hale. £8.50). The 'memories of a diplomat' 1942-1958 cover Harold Eeman's last years in the Belgian Diplomatic Service. He served in Iran 1942-1943, Ethiopia 1943-1945, Poland 1945-1948, Egypt 1948-1956 and Canada 1956-1958. As in his earlier memoirs, Mr. Eeman writes with great felicity and charm, while being a penetrating and shrewd observer of the world around him. He gives, for example, a graphic picture of ruined Warsaw and the courage of the Poles when he arrived in 1945, and the ruthless imposition of Russian communist control. Life in Egypt was more leisurely and agreeable for him, while he gives a vivid account of the deposition of King Farouk and the rise of President Nasser. It is a book full of atmosphere, and never a dull page.

**A Question of Reality** (Muller. £5.95). Answers from Poland is the subtitle of this critique of Polish society by the Polish writer, Zazimierz Brandys. It takes the form of answers to a questionnaire by a Polish born American sociologist at an international convention. The author was a member of the Communist Party from 1946 to 1966, when he resigned, clearly disillusioned by the system. He thinks that after the war, 'a socialist Polish regime could have been created. I repeat had it been allowed'. In the result under Russian communism 'everything is flattened reduced to one dimension; no individual opinions may be heard, there is but one political programme'. This book was first published in French in 1978. It is now translated in an English edition. Since the great political changes in Poland during the last year, has the author modified his views? Perhaps he will write a revised edition.

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